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THE MESSAGE OF THE SWORD

BY

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I.

IN the courtyard of the tropically shaded Mexican hacienda, Mariana, the sleek bay mare, reared and swerved aside as old Pereira attempted to hold and soothe her.

The sight of her forefeet beating the air was too much for Pereira. He hurriedly surrendered the reins to their mutual mistress, Señorita Catherine de Zarate—and Mariana dropped back to earth.

"You're a coward, Pereira, and she knows it," laughed the girl as the old peon picked up a basin of warm water, in which floated a small sponge, and cautiously reapproached the mare. He attempted no denial of his mistress's charge.

However little Pereira appreciated the situation, girl and mare made a charming picture; for each was arrestingly beautiful. The girl's face was oval, with a skin velvet as a dove's breast and faintly enriched with olive. Her full, scarlet lips were cut to express both passion and sweetness; her eyes were of that dark splendor, silk-shadowed by long lashes, which is peculiarly the south's gift.

The mare was still snorting contempt at Pereira, and also dancing backward to avoid him, when Señorita de Zarate's chaperon, Señora Gertrudis Gomez de Avellaneda, came hurrying from the house—

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although she took good care not to come more than a few steps from the piazza.

"*Madre de Dios!*" exclaimed the horrified widow. "What are you doing with that savage beast, Catherine?"

"She is n't a savage beast. I am trying to bathe a little cut on her forehead. But she hates Pereira, because he's afraid of her."

"Sainted Virgin!" groaned the Señora Avellaneda. "You are too fearless, Catherine, for a well-behaved girl. You might as well be an American!"

"Well, I'm half American," laughed Señorita de Zarate, touching with soft, healing fingers the wide, intelligent forehead of the now complaisant mare.

"Holy saints, yes! Daily I have to endure your use of their harsh tongue. That was your lamented mother's fault! She began teaching it to you in your cradle. When she died, at your fourteenth year, the mischief was done. Yes, yes, it was her mistake."

"My mother made no mistake, Cousin Gertrudis." The girl's voice was singularly cutting. She had finished with the mare, and Pereira was leading the animal away.

"I did n't mean to vex you, Catherine! It's your silly way to think your loved ones, alive or dead, have no faults. All creatures have faults, child. I, Gertrudis Gomez de Avellaneda, out of my wide experience, tell you so! Even my late lamented husband had little vices. He drank, he swore, he gambled. Men must have their little ways. Not that I did n't tell him of them. Day and night I reminded him of his sins. It is a true wife's office. I do not love speech. Silence in meditation is my delight. But we must advise and counsel men. I counselled. I warned. In his playful way, he said once that my tongue was a mill-clapper. He would jest, poor dear man. Come into the house, child, and have done gazing after that terrible mare! If she is really a mare! I call her an evil spirit. She permits only you to ride her, the peons tell me, and some day she will injure you." Continuing to pour out a steady stream of words, the widow drifted back into the coolest part of the house.

Catherine herself went up to her own room. There she shook out and rearranged the heavy silken masses of her lustrously dark hair, disordered by her argument with the mare. Her thoughts were far away. Somewhere, to-day, was desperate fighting; somewhere her father was in the van. But God would protect him. Had not she herself hung around his neck a blessed charm?

"God would not take from me my father, my heart's best beloved!" she murmured.

Her thoughts were checked by the entrance of her maid, a pretty young Mexican.

"Oh, Señorita! No one less than General Mendoza has just arrived! He is in the large drawing-room, and he asks for you. Stay, Señorita, you will array yourself in a prettier gown? Holy Virgin, that one is so plain!"

"No, no, Vittoria. What do I care about pretty gowns now? Perhaps my father is coming; no doubt he has sent a message ahead by General Mendoza. I shall go down as I am."

As she left the room, the maid gazed after her with a shake of her pretty head.

"To go down to the General in so plain a gown! *Madre de Dios!* It's a bad omen for the General—if he has come courting again!" She gave an irrepressible little giggle, hurried out into the hall and down to the courtyard, where she continued her surmises to the attentive ears of old Pereira. "A third time for luck, he thinks, that General Mendoza—yes? And so he comes back to get another rejection! Twice has the Señorita said no. Chut!—I was in good listening distance both times! Sainted Virgin, don't you remember how the second time he left the place looking like a thunder-cloud?"

"He will get her in the end! They say that whenever General Mendoza says, '*I will have,*' his wish comes to him."

Vittoria tossed her head.

"Not when he cries for the moon!"

II.

THERE are men who always create in their womankind a belief that they will return in safety. The household of Alvarez de Zarate had little doubt of his invincibility. They prayed and sometimes shivered over the thoughts of the perils he encountered; but they invariably felt he would come home, laurelled, and smiling in his old, kindly, magnetic way.

Consequently Catherine went down to the messenger with a dancing step. She entered the room blushing a little, because she wished a different visitor had come. Like Vittoria, she feared another demand on Mendoza's part for her hand.

Her preconceived idea of a happy message from her father, her unreasoning faith in his safety, made it all the harder for her to comprehend Mendoza's meaning when he came gently and sadly forward, silently holding out to her a sword.

The handle, richly inlaid with gold, held a blade of the finest steel. The scabbard was exquisitely chased; the whole depended from a belt of beautifully embossed leather.

This sword had been a gift from Diaz to Captain de Zarate. Catherine knew that her father never let the weapon out of his sight by day or his reach by night.

Therefore, that this weapon should return divorced from its manly owner gave the steel a bitter eloquence. The girl gazed on it with distended, terrified eyes, refusing to accept its obvious meaning.

"Señorita," the Castilian murmured softly, his rich voice seeming to falter, his eyes full of open pity, "don't you read the message of the sword—or must I put it into words?"

She was silent. She stared from the sword to Mendoza's face. In its too heavily featured way, the countenance was handsome yet, in spite of the lines his devotion to pleasure had written there. Just now he had managed to withdraw every expression except that of the most exemplary sympathy.

He continued pityingly, "Your father loved this weapon——"

"Loved!"

The broken cry was an instinctive protest against the use of the past tense.

"Better things concern him now. Your gallant father is—I cannot soften the word—dead."

A cry broke piercingly from Catherine de Zarate; her senses swam with the stabbing pain of this initial loss. She flung out her hands blindly. She would have fallen, had not Mendoza, dropping the sword, sprung forward in time to catch her in his arms. As he supported her warm and yielding figure, he inwardly anathematized the presence of the chaperon. He was sick to cover the soft mouth with kisses.

When Catherine came to herself, she was on a divan, half lying in Mendoza's arms. His voice, passionately sympathetic, was at her ear. On the other side the widow caught at her hands, and wildly implored her to say she was not dead. Modesty and pride rushed to Catherine's rescue. She rose, swiftly enough, from both lover and chaperon, and said, with that mournful self-possession which sits so touchingly on youth in sorrow:

"General Mendoza, was there nothing more for me?"

Mendoza rose in his turn. His face was flushed with feeling; his rich voice seemed to falter as he extended a letter.

"There is a message, Señorita. Your father employed all his last strength in dictating this page, signed, as you will see, by his own hand. I could have sent the letter by an ordinary messenger. At great personal risk, I brought it myself, with only a half-dozen men to guard me. I would trust it in no less loyal hands than my own." He bowed respectfully.

Catherine was deeply touched. Tears streamed down her pale face as she took the folded sheet.

"My cousin will care for you," she sobbed. "I must go to my own room to read this. But I will come back to you and thank you, my father's true friend."

Alone with her letter, Catherine's trembling fingers slowly and painfully opened it; for if there is consolation in a message from the dead, there is also a keen anticipatory anguish.

At first the lines blurred before her; then, resolutely, she drew one hand across her long lashes, clearing them of the salt drops. She read:

MY DARLING CATHERINE:

With my last strength I shall sign this dictated letter. Our old sweet companionship is over. I am dying, my darling. What hurts deepest is that I might have come home safely to you at the end of this war, had I not met the most villainous treachery from *El Diablo*, Madero's American ally. This fellow met me by agreement in the ruins of the hacienda Molina, under a flag of truce, to agree on an exchange of prisoners. When our parley was over and I turned to ride away, the dastard shot me in the back.

Catherine uttered a smothered shriek; but with strained eyes and a heart whose beats seemed to falter in regularity, she read on:

I have no son. But you have been, in your fine tenderness and courage, son and daughter both. I can't help a natural appeal to you, Catherine. You love me—revenge me on this *El Diablo*. It kills me twice to think of this fellow living to boast of his vile treachery.

You have heroic blood in your veins. Be worthy of it. Be worthy of the love I have always given you. Revenge me, my daughter! My trusted friend, General Mendoza, will show you the way.

This is the last command of

Thy father,

ALVAREZ DE ZARATE

When the last word had been read, the girl sat there in silence. Unconsciously the letter was clenched in her quivering fingers, that steeled over it as she visualized that whole cruel episode of *El Diablo's* treachery.

Under the terrible power of that vision, the clouding softness of her first touching sorrow fell from her. The muscles of her young face grew tense, the sweet lips bitter, the lovely eyes hard with a momentarily strengthening resolve.

For nearly an hour she sat communing with herself, staring into a new world of peril and augmenting hate. Then she rose quietly, and as quietly went back to the waiting messenger.

"General Mendoza, you know the contents of this letter?"

He bowed.

"Señorita, yes! It was dictated to me."

"General, I am at your orders. All my life I have adored my father and faithfully obeyed him. It is not likely that I shall fail him now."

III.

IN the cooling shadows of drooping tropical foliage, occasionally refreshing themselves with secret sips from some especially vile *pulque*, a quartet of Madero's ragged soldiers gambled industriously. Their part of the army was fresh from another victory. The rebels had taken a small but wealthy village; the federals had taken—to their heels, leaving not a few dead and wounded from their own number. It had been a night surprise, and its success was all owing to *El Diablo*, whom the rebels regarded with half-superstitious affection, owing to his uncanny way of getting in and out of the federal camps unscathed.

Part of *El Diablo's* success in scouting was due to a run of sheer good luck in adventure; part to his wide knowledge of the country, his quickness and daring, and his swift perception of just such elemental conditions as best shield a scout.

Added to this was keen attention to detail; such as the clever padding of his horse's feet, his own Indian-like tread, his study of the horses he used.

And then, like many men, he loved peril for the sheer joy of danger. This gave him a judgment unalloyed by fear, and a steadiness of nerve possessed only by such a type of soldier. Naturally, the Mexicans did not stop for such analysis. They accounted his life charmed, a simplification of explanation always agreeable to the proletariat.

The smallest soldier drew out a handful of coins and regarded them fatuously.

"Thanks to our *Americano*, I have eaten, drunk, and I see the color of money! May the saints guard him!"

"And he fights merely for the joy of it!" Another soldier spoke wonderingly. "He cares nothing for gold, and less for women."

"True," admitted the first speaker, letting his coins filter carelessly through his fingers. "So it was all the more a good jest that our pretty dancer should have turned to Don Stanford for rescue the other day."

"What tale is that?" cried the other soldiers eagerly. "What about the dancer and our *Americano*?"

"Why, it was back there in our hill camp, two weeks ago——"

"And thou hast kept it from us all this time? To the devil with thee for a lip-miser!"

"Am I a babbling woman? And can I talk without tobacco?"

His want was instantly supplied. He rolled his cigarette tantalizingly.

"Had it been thee, Fernando, or thee, Vasco, or thee, Davila—how ye had run to tell the latest gossip! Now, I——"

"Cease bragging and give us the tale or we will take away the tobacco!"

"Well, as I said, we were in the hill camp, in San Nunez. You

remember that fool of a place that could never decide which army it really wanted?"

"Aye—so both pulled it to pieces! To the devil with villages or men who don't take sides!"

"Some of our men, and some from General Vasquez's division, were in the public garden, drinking. Who should come to their amusement but the veiled dancer who has been flitting around here. She offered to dance for money if she should be pledged against insult or the lifting of her veil.

"The officers cried out, 'Yes! Yes!' They were eager to see her dance. So she had a space cleared and danced. What grace! Fire of the sunset, perfume of roses—and many other things—made up that dance. When she stopped, in one long, sweeping curtsy, they broke out into hand-clapping, and *Carramba!* how they showered flowers and money on her! It made me sick with envy! She gathered it all up and was putting it into her sash when an officer from the third division came up. He swore loudly that such dancing must belong to a lovely face, and that she must lift her veil."

"Which she was probably glad to do," sneered the dealer, still withholding his cards. "Give any pretty woman an excuse for showing off, and how quickly she takes it!"

"Not this one! She wrapped herself in her long veil, and in a second she had flown to the side of Don Stanford——"

The speaker suddenly halted. A tall, soldierly figure, alert with the joy of living, emerged from the trees and walked toward Madero's own tent, pitched some distance away. If he saw the gamblers, he gave no sign of it, but went on with a rapid stride.

"There goes Don Stanford now," exclaimed one of the men. The dealer nodded. "Yes, and his sword-belt encloses a man."

"But the girl, the dancer—what did she say to our American?"

"Oh, she spoke like a frightened bird, her voice was so sweet. 'Señor Stanford,' she cried to him, 'protect me! I am helpless—alone!'

"He had no time to answer her. The officer's hand was on her veil, so Don Stanford just knocked him flat. The man went down like a stunned ox, and he was some time getting up. Meanwhile, the Señorita and Don Stanford went away together." The speaker fell silent, smoking again. His auditors inquired indignantly:

"And what happened after that?"

"Why, nothing! The third division went south. There was no duel. Don Stanford followed our general here. The dancer flits in and out, as you yourselves have seen. She's just a wild gipsy, but she's heart and soul with us. They say she has offered Madero her services as a spy in Mendoza's camp, so he lets her hang around until she may prove useful. The Virgin knows he can't afford to despise the least help!"

"Don Stanford has no appreciation! To rescue a pretty girl from another man is to put oneself under obligation to court her," laughed the dealer.

"They've not been seen together again. And twice the dancer has passed him without such notice as I'd give my dog."

"These Americans are ice! Where does the girl camp?"

"They say Madero has given her permission to live in a hut near here—in some ravine. She must have a convincing way with her, or she'd get no chance to hang on here."

"Women make good spies," returned the smallest soldier sententiously. "She may yet help to turn the tide for us. Deal, Fernando, deal! I want to play while my luck holds."

IV.

As the soldiers gossiped, the afternoon sun sank lower until the rays struck squarely into the door of a little adobe hut hidden by the kindly walls of a ravine that opened to the west.

In that tropic quietude, tall palm trees dreamed above the little house. Its crudity was softened by masses of climbing vines, and by lush grasses creeping to the very steps.

Under the shadow of a wide-foliaged tree, on a pile of cushions, a girl sat with a guitar in her slender fingers. From the strings an idly-sweet accompaniment floated as, in a rich contralto, passionately warm as a redbird's voice, she sang:

Will no cloud gather, will no breath blow
From the far, far hill and the far, faint snow?
The sun burns white in the noon above,
And my heart is burnt like a flame for love!

But oh, if thy heart had wings,
To fly like a bluebird far,
Away and away to the end of the day,
Where the cool and the palm trees are;
Away, to awake my love,
Who swings in her hammock there—
If only to breathe at her sweet, sweet ear,
Or die like a kiss in her hair!

"Brava!" cried a man's deep voice, as a soldierly figure paused at the gate. "Brava—and encore!"

She started—or seemed to start. Then she rose and swept him a curtsy almost gipsy-like in its pretty mockery. There were no Romany lines in her face, however.

"Does the Señor Herrick find it necessary to ask *again* after my poor health?"

"Ask me to come in," retorted Stanford.

"Not I—the roses are good enough company!" She dropped her guitar, and, picking up a long-stemmed rose, caressed it impishly, her red lips touching it softly. Above the rose her eyes were shining with a curiously daring brilliancy.

"Then I'll come in, any way," challenged Stanford, and entered the yard. Instantly she picked up her guitar and, singing, walked off to the little piazza, where she dropped into a hammock and swung carelessly.

"How can I help it if you *will* find a chair? But really, you know, when there's only poor old Verona and myself, I should n't let you come here. Even a dancer—who sinks to dance for—bread—has to observe the conventions."

Taking a chair near the hammock, the American said quietly:

"No doubt you dance for bread, Señorita Infelice; probably for the bread of some sick relative dependent on you. But you are no common dancer."

This time she really started; but she only said carelessly:

"No, indeed! I dance—uncommonly."

"Under all your wild ways, your daring venture into a dancer's life, there is an inexplicable reserve—that is, inexplicable if you were n't what I am perfectly sure you are—a girl as delicately bred as any sister of my own at home."

She flushed, laughed, strummed a little on the strings, and then said coolly:

"A pretty compliment, *Señor Americano*! Very pretty! What makes you think you can really tell anything of me? You know that I've convinced General Madero that I may be of use politically—since I've already given him some valuable bits of information which have turned out reliable. Politically, yes, you know me. But when you talk of 'reserve' and 'sisters'—that's merely guesswork!"

"I have a peculiar gift," hesitated Stanford. "It's almost like a—kind of clairvoyance; it is so clear—it's what I call, for lack of a better name, psychological insight. It has never failed me. I—I suppose it will sound quite ridiculous. But the fact is, I can read both men and women."

"Indeed! You are exceptionally fortunate!" Her voice rang ironically. She continued, snapping her small fingers, "That for your psychological insight! I know my own soul; who else should know it? And you can't—unless I choose to let you! It's like a little house with locked doors; and you can't see through them!"

"Not through the doors; but through the clear, uncurtained windows of your soul. Look at me, Infelice!"

She turned her glance levelly on him. A brilliant challenge starred her look; but a certain fear sat there, and a vague perplexity. He smiled.

"I see down into your soul."

"Chut! What's down there?"

"Natural cruelty toward man! Be a little kinder. Take me into your confidence, *Señorita*. Why are you here in our camp, earning such few pieces as you can by dancing?"

"Is it any affair of yours?"

He flushed. "You know it's my affair—and why. You know what your witchery and charm have done to me in these two weeks. You know perfectly well that I love you!"

"You 'love' me? Oh, but that word means so little in American! I once knew an old Texas farmer who came down here to buy cattle. He would say, 'Give me turnips for dinner, *Señorita*! I just love 'em!' Ah, why look so angry? It is quite obvious the *Señor Americano* is only—what do you call it?—flirting!"

Stanford bent toward her.

"Infelice," he said simply, "I ask you to be my wife."

She stared at him, bit her lip, and then said dryly:

"You have courage, *Señor*! To ask a stranger like me to marry you!"

"I have the courage of my convictions. I believe I can read people. I've looked into your eyes, and I've seen there only purity, courage, and tenderness."

"Men see in a woman's eyes what they want to see! And this flattering marriage you offer—you have not, by chance, *Señor Stranger*, another wife at home?"

Stanford sprang to his feet, white with anger at the thrust. Wordlessly, he turned and went down the steps. Instantly, with a face of alarm and the speed of a lapwing, the girl was after him.

She arrested him by catching his right arm, and exclaiming in a voice of melting sweetness:

"Ah, forgive me that, *Señor*—forgive me! I have had so much trouble, I am utterly detestable!"

He turned and stood looking down into her eyes.

"Trouble, Infelice?"

"Yes, yes! I am no common dancer. I admit that! I dance—for some one I love. Some one who—who—must have bread. I will tell you all about myself—only, forgive me!"

"Tell me, Infelice—do I look like the scoundrel you insinuated I might be?"

Her head drooped.

"Ah, no! I cannot find one line of villainy in your face!" She raised her eyes defiantly, with a wild flash of coquetry. "I only said that because I am so terribly afraid——"

"Of what, Infelice?"

"That I might learn to love you!"

Instantly he tried to catch her in his arms; but she was gone as quickly as she had come. Darting into the house, she locked the door, and then, breathless, exquisitely flushed, she mocked him from an open window:

"No more conversation this evening, *Señor Americano*! Good-by!"

"Until to-morrow?"

"*Quien sabe?* Well, then, to-morrow!"

V.

ON the following afternoon the soldiers of Madero again gambled intermittently, but intently. Stanford was busy with his commander until nearly five o'clock, overhauling maps and plans, discussing topography, helping to play on paper games soon to be played in bloody earnest. At five the American went back to his own tent. There he could again dream of the approaching hour for his evening visit to Infelice. But his thoughts were broken by the entrance of a soldier, who announced disdainfully:

"A peon, to see the *Señor Herrick*. He brings the *Señor* this." The soldier extended a seal ring. Herrick's pulses leaped, but he spoke impassively.

"All right, Alfonso. Let the man in."

"Doubtless the ring is gilt?" suggested the fellow, eying it.

"What concern is that of yours, sir? Let the man in and take yourself off."

The Mexican sulkily withdrew and motioned to the waiting peon to enter. There came into Stanford's presence an oldish man, bowing effusively, hat in hand. Silently he offered a note; silently the American took it. Regarding the messenger keenly, he said sharply:

"You are remarkably like an old woman I've seen lately—at a certain hut."

The messenger writhed apologetically.

"Why not, *Señor*? I know whom you mean. She is, as I am, in the service of the *Señorita Infelice*. You are thinking of Verona, my twin sister."

"Well, that accounts for it. I knew at once that I had seen your double somewhere." As he spoke, Herrick opened and read his note, with an external calm he was far from feeling.

TO THE SEÑOR HERRICK STANFORD:

There was need of my visiting my father, and I did so; but I have hurt my ankle, and I cannot return without a horse. I am in the old ruins of Molina. Will you bring a horse for me? Or is the danger too great? The ruins are across the river, you know, well outside your lines. Ask the bearer for directions—if you come.

INFELICE

Stanford flushed hotly. Some of the phrases stung him cruelly. "Or is the danger too great?" "If you come." Curtly, incisively, he questioned the Mexican. With many servile writhings, the peon gave clear directions. Herrick Stanford nodded comprehendingly, as he said slowly:

"These ruins are close to the plain of Molina, where we defeated Mendoza some weeks ago. He retreated with his wounded, and we had, at the time, too small a force to pursue. Is n't that so?"

"The Señor is right. The Señor's memory is wonderful. Does the Señor carry to the Señorita the horse?"

"Certainly I do."

"The Señor will not need a guide, now he knows the way?"

"No, I don't need a guide. You would only impede me. I can find my way there without any trouble." He pressed a piece of money into the Mexican's ready palm.

"I have just had reports from that line of country. Their outpost has fallen back. I shall be in no danger in reaching the ruin—and my horse carries double."

"But the Señor will not tell any one where he is going? For the Señorita would wish it a secret. She said so herself."

"Of course I shan't tell, you idiot! Now listen, you can wait here for our return, or with your sister at the hut."

"With my sister at the hut, Señor. She is not well. May success follow the Señor Sanford! The Virgin bring him safely to the Señorita!"

"Is her foot much hurt?"

"*Dios*, Señor, who can say? The Señor might carry some linen and a little liniment. It won't take much linen to go around the Señorita's ankle—it might be that of a deer. But I may not be of further aid, and I withdraw."

Leave of absence was granted unquestioningly to the valuable American by Madero himself, and two hours later Stanford's horse was swimming the west ford. Half an hour more and he was bending over a small, silk-clad ankle, which was damp with clotted blood from a small flesh wound. With fingers firmly tender, he cut away the stocking, bathed the little wound, and wound his bandages around it; Infelice sitting quietly on one of the stone seats which still graced the roofless

piazza, her eyes glittering with a strange exultation, her face void of its usual color.

Barring the lizards with their small bright eyes, and the gelding, who now and then stamped impatiently in the brilliant southern moonlight, there was no living thing in the ruins but these two. Far to the left the hill ran sloping to a little valley; there a raw mound rose, with a crude white cross at the head. One could see the cross distinctly in the moonlight. Those who sought the grave might read its inscription: "To the memory of a gallant soldier treacherously murdered." Mendoza's own fingers had cut this inscription.

But Stanford had no thought for graves; he was happily concerned with the living.

"Poor little wounded ankle," he said softly, rising from his finished task. "That cut is close to a muscle, so be careful with the foot until it is perfectly well. And now your father—is he ill? Is he near us?"

She glanced quickly at him, then turned her eyes away. "Very near." She paused abruptly; her eyes still avoided his.

"Child," said Herrick gently, "remember you are half American. Put away that indomitable Castilian pride of yours. It distresses me beyond words. I want to help your father. No matter what straits he is in, could you think so little of me as to suppose I should honor him less because, like hundreds of gentlemen, he has lost a fortune? *A pobreza no hay verguenza!*"

Her lids drooped veilingly. She moved restlessly, then rose hurriedly and limped to a small rough table, which she had dragged out and placed near one of the stone seats. "I've—I've had some cold coffee—brought in this flask; but I saved a share for you. You shall drink it out of the cup I used. See, I've poured it for you."

He joined her at the table. "You unselfish girl—thinking of me! Tell me, Infelice, how often am I in your thoughts?"

"Always," she muttered, watching the untasted cup in his hand. "Are n't you—are n't you going to drink, Herrick?"

"If you sweeten the cup by tasting it," he said teasingly, holding it out to her. She took it instantly; but her shaking fingers could scarcely lift it to her lips.

"I'm—I'm unnerved by that cut," she stammered, touching the cup with a mouth that permitted no drop to enter; then gave it back to him.

He took it hastily, drained it, and regarded her anxiously.

"You are absolutely done for, Infelice. And now for our programme. I must see your father. Then I can find a way to carry him into our lines. Take me to him, Infelice. Come—it's time for me to insist!"

"I—I—let me think, Herrick. I——"

"You hurt me by this hesitation."

"Give me a little while to think it over, Herrick. And do sit down!"

"At your feet," returned Stanford instantly. As she sank on one of the stone seats, he sat like a boy on the floor near her. "You shall have an hour for thinking it over, if you like. But this is *my* hour, too; because you're at last going to trust me. Dearest, trust me further yet! Say you'll marry me to-morrow!"

"Don't make me talk of marrying—now!"

He looked up at her as she sat there, pale, restless, furtively watchful of him. Suddenly he took her hands in his, touching her finger-tips softly with his firm, red lips.

"I scribbled a couple of verses to you the other night. Care about hearing them?"

"Yes."

"What a faint yes! Never mind! Here goes:

"I do not hold it wonderful
She beyond others fair should be;
Nor that her soul's white radiance
Should shine in such sweet clarity;
She was so dear in God's own eyes
He could not shape her otherwise.

"How beautiful the world will be
When I have won her for my own,
When all her pure perfection's sum
Surrendered is to me alone;
And all my prayer to Heaven is this:
God make me worthy of her kiss!

"There's another verse, poor stuff as it is; but I—it seems, I can't remember it. I feel beastly stupid, somehow. Do you care for verse, Infelice?"

"Yes, I do."

"I'm drowsy. I don't understand it. I must be ill. I was never this way——"

Stanford forced himself to his feet. "There's a fog over everything. I'm ill, Infelice, or——" He staggered to the table, dropped on the gray stone bench near it, and sat there, fighting against the curious numbness clouding his brain. The battle was hopeless; consciousness left him, and Stanford lay with his head on his arms, leaning half across the table.

"Herrick!" the girl called sharply, pantingly, her eyes dilating. "Oh, Herrick!" He did not answer. She sprang up and paced the piazza floor; but he did not stir.

Presently she paused and stared down the valley, to where a white cross gleamed cruelly. For a few moments her gaze enveloped it and its isolation, its desolate surroundings.

Dusk was now falling. She waited until it darkened into actual night; then she took a lantern from the ruins, lighted it, and flashed it, signalwise, from the hill.

VI.

WHEN, hours later, Herrick Stanford regained his senses, it was to fancy, in the first few confused moments, that he was dreaming a very exasperating dream. For he could move neither to the right nor to the left; his wrists being strapped to his cot's sides, and his ankles fettered to the cot's foot. His head alone was left in freedom. Only a few feet away sat General Mendoza, smoking quietly, and evidently taking no chances with his new acquisition.

On seeing Stanford's eyes open, and his stare of perplexity, the Spaniard said slowly and courteously:

"You are in the tent of myself—General Mendoza—Don Stanford. I explain in my own tongue, as Fame reports your ease in speaking Spanish. I regret your present bonds. I hope soon to loosen them."

Herrick Stanford made no reply. Memory was fighting for her own. Presently the scene in the ruins came clearly back to him; even to his own desperate efforts to keep awake when he realized that he was drugged. But he had no suspicions of Infelice; although he was tormented by a great anxiety concerning her.

"Do you remember, Señor," asked Mendoza, flicking the ash lightly from his half-smoked cigar, "how you made the journey here?"

"No."

"Do you know how you were captured?"

"Evidently I was drugged."

"But, pardon me, Don Stanford, how came a man of your keen wits, you who have evaded us so successfully, to be drugged?"

Stanford made no reply. Mendoza smiled slowly. "Who drugged you, Señor?"

"I don't know; but if I had my hands on the fellow——"

"The 'fellow,' Señor! You know very well you never received that cup of coffee from the hands of man."

They knew, then, that a woman had been with him. But perhaps they knew no more than that. Perhaps by now she had crossed the ford on his horse and was safe in Madero's lines. He was again silent.

Quickened into a nascent jealousy by the American's unsuspecting loyalty, Mendoza measured approximately the depth of Stanford's illimitable trust; and resented it indescribably.

"I really think, Don Stanford, that I must tell you a little history. When you, by some infernal luck, continued to investigate our lines with impunity, risking a spy's ignominious death——"

"I was never in disguise, never out of the uniform of my party," interrupted Stanford.

"That may be true; but technically you come under the classification of spy."

"That's a lie, and you know it."

"Señor, nothing is to be gained by mere brutality of language. I will only say that we got tired of your rather insulting experiments. We decided that the best way to entrap you was to trust the matter to our lovely secret-service enthusiast, Catherine de Zarate. I proposed the scheme to her. She made a captive of you. By the way, she found your clumsy American love-making indescribably amusing."

He paused, and was exasperated afresh to find he got nothing but a steady stare of contempt.

"Your companion," continued Mendoza sharply, "who gave you the drugged coffee—which she prepared herself under the direction of my man, Iriarte—was none other than Señorita Catherine de Zarate. My soldiers brought you here at her command."

Still that look of contempt, and no reply.

"You're aware, Señor, there is a fine price on your head—that meant something to the Señorita. Now you know the whole truth."

Stanford's answer came coldly but forcefully, his eyes steeling: "All this stuff you've told me is a pack of sheer lies. I never saw your Catherine de Zarate in my life."

VII.

MENDOZA fixed his prisoner with a keenly interrogative glance; but there was no mistaking the sincerity of Stanford's attitude.

With a shrug, Mendoza summoned his aide-de-camp, Major de Ulloa, who entered, saluted, and waited. His gaze fell observantly on the American, as Mendoza said abruptly:

"My compliments to the Señorita Catherine de Zarate, and ask her if she will honor me by her presence here a few moments. No need, Major, to mention the matter in hand."

Major de Ulloa saluted and disappeared. As he walked toward the sick-tents, where he knew he should find Catherine, his face was saturnine with unhappiness. For De Ulloa had learned, unfortunately for his own peace, that Mendoza had not exaggerated either the beauty or the charm of Catherine de Zarate. De Ulloa was wretchedly, desperately, in love with her; a fact which he dared not betray. His formerly amiable feelings toward his chief had undergone a dreadful deterioration, into a

despairing hatred of the very sight of Mendoza's smooth airs and good-looking face.

During De Ulloa's absence, there was no interchange of conversation between Mendoza and his prisoner. Mendoza was waiting, in pleased anticipation, the effect Catherine's arrival would have. Stanford was endeavoring to puzzle out exactly what Mendoza was trying to compass by establishing a meeting between himself and a female adventuress, and wondering, in sick uncertainty of soul, if he would ever hear whether Infelice had escaped. That his own shrift would be short, he more than suspected. He half guessed he might be summarily condemned and hung as a spy; but his most cruel anxiety was for the woman he loved immutably and trusted unconditionally.

When De Ulloa returned, and Infelice herself entered the tent, a shock half sorrow, half joy, ran through Stanford. Sorrow that she was taken, joy that she was safe and well. No doubt of her besmirched his mind. He merely felt more than ever perplexed as to why Mendoza had woven such a tissue of lies around them both. Fearful of doing her some evil by recognition, Stanford's face remained perfectly blank. He left her to give him his cue. If acquaintance with *El Diablo* would be an injury to her, it should not come to Mendoza's knowledge through any childish eagerness on Stanford's part.

Catherine herself had entered unsuspectingly. She had thought Stanford in the small guard-house. When she saw him stretched at length before her, she was taken by surprise. To Mendoza's annoyance, she shrank visibly.

"General, is this kind of you?"

"I had to have you here, Señorita. I'm in possession of a sceptic who is incredulous concerning the dual personality of Señorita Catherine de Zarate and the girl he knew by the sentimental name of Infelice."

She paled. Then the man lying before her still believed in her! Murderer though he was, how hard that she should have to enlighten him!

"Haven't I done enough?" she protested in a low voice.

"No—unless you want the world to think you burnt your fingers, *ma belle militaire*, in your good work."

She flushed, went defiantly to the side of Stanford's cot, and said with simple directness:

"Must I tell you myself, Señor Stanford?"

His eyes met hers calmly. Suddenly a rare illuminating smile rose in them as he said in a low tone, in English:

"I don't know how they're trying to tangle you, what lies they're forcing you to tell. But never mind me—only take care of yourself, my darling."

Catherine de Zarate flushed more deeply still. She knew that Men-

doza, who was an exceptional linguist and especially proud of his French and English, heard and understood; a fact instantly evident when he broke out stormily:

"Answer the obsessed idiot, the complacent fool! Explain, Señorita, explain!"

And Catherine, looking Herrick Stanford steadily in the eyes, said in English:

"Every word General Mendoza has told you is absolutely true. I am Catherine de Zarate. You are virtually my prisoner. As Infelice, I drugged you last night."

VIII.

THERE ensued an absolute silence. Under the irrefragably convincing ring of her voice, Herrick Stanford lay mute, psychically stunned into sheer numbness.

Mendoza, in quiet gratification, watched him keenly. Juan de Ulloa, with a gentleman's instinct, turned his gaze from the prisoner's face.

Catherine would have gone instantly, but she could not drag her eyes from those of the American. A painful curiosity, stronger than her own will, held her—to see how he would take her revelation.

She was not pleased by what she saw. Stanford's eyes suddenly blazed comprehendingly, with a scorn of her so scorching that she answered it as though he had spoken, exclaiming passionately:

"You have no possible right to show such contempt of me! What I did to you, I had a right to do! It was not for any cheap glory. The voice of the dead was my real officer. You know, in your execrably wicked, treacherous heart, how you yourself——"

Mendoza hurried forward and caught her gently by one hand, with a firm but respectful touch.

"Don't humble yourself by any justification of your high work to him. Come away. A grateful Mexico will know how to reward you for all you have done."

Catherine yielded. Angry as she was, there was yet in her a feeling that she suffered too acutely under Stanford's gaze to care to endure it any longer. She left the tent. At a sign from Mendoza, De Ulloa walked with her as escort. Mendoza himself returned to his prisoner, to whom he had much to say.

By his own orders, Mendoza's staff had taken themselves off, with the exception of Major de Ulloa.

Left alone with his prisoner, Mendoza lighted another of his eternal cigars and sat smoking quietly, regarding his captive thoughtfully from the shadowed corners of his black eyes.

Stanford's face was now quite expressionless, except for its measured

hardness. But by its tense immobility Mendoza guessed something of the American's mental pain. Nearly half an hour passed in this way. Mendoza had at times the lazy deliberation of the feline, which equally implies that at others he was as swift in action as an ocelot.

At the end of half an hour, Juan de Ulloa returned.

At a word from Mendoza, he seated himself also, and, like his superior, consoled himself with tobacco.

At last Mendoza, throwing down a cigar-stub, turned to his prisoner. "I need hardly point out to you, Don Stanford, that you are in a desperate situation."

"Not necessarily."

"Don't flatter yourself with any hopes of escape. Your bonds will never be slacked a moment, not even when you stand before a firing squad, with your coffin behind you, unless——"

"Unless what?"

"Unless you play a sensible man's part, leave those desperate traitors, and throw in your fortunes with us."

"A renegade is a delightful addition to any decent man's army!"

"You would n't be a renegade, Don Stanford. I myself would fight any man who called you so. You would merely be a man enlightened from error."

"Let me enlighten *you* from error. You're wasting your time talking this rot to me. Drop it!"

"Pardon, Señor—is it 'rot'—since you adopt that extraordinary English word into your fluent Spanish—is it 'rot' for you to perceive that you support a tottering cause, upheld by discredited ragamuffins? The regular government in no way recognizes Madero's men as constituting a real army. They are virtually peons in rebellion, subject when taken to any penalties we choose to inflict on them. Not a man in your so-called army, Don Stanford, is protected in any way by the usual articles of war. You don't come under a respectable enough heading. Let me have the information which you can so easily furnish, and there is nothing you may not ask."

"You want information?"

"*Si, si, Señor!*" assented Mendoza, barely controlling his eagerness.

"Some information, at least, I may honestly give you." Mendoza leaned forward. Major de Ulloa looked interested. "But perhaps you'd rather be alone when you hear it?"

"No, Señor; Major de Ulloa has my absolute confidence."

"What I have to tell you," returned Stanford gently, "is beyond question reliable. It is, in fact, self-evident." His tones abruptly chorded into a change that matched his words as he added sharply, "I beg to inform you, General Mendoza, that you are a black-hearted scoundrel, trying uselessly to make me into one just like you!"

Mendoza was a quick-tempered man, swift to take offense and very little used to anything but the most careful deference. He was taken completely off his guard, stung into fury. His sword leaped out of its scabbard like an involuntary thing. Before Juan de Ulloa could interfere, the point of the blade pricked Stanford's throat.

Then Mendoza, looking, after the fashion of all good swordsmen, into his enemy's eyes, saw the sardonic laughter in the American's gray orbs. As swiftly as he had been infuriated, the Spaniard realized how nearly, how very nearly, Stanford had come to receiving from the hands of the man whose wild temper he had cleverly and purposely provoked the gift which, in his present despair, he most wanted.

With an exclamation of disgust at his own folly, Mendoza rammed his sword back into its scabbard:

"You are excessively 'smart,' Señor," he exclaimed wrathfully. "I believe 'smart' is the Yankee word! You almost got what you planned for; but not quite! And so you will *not* be reasonable? Will *not* talk! You a mere mercenary, fighting for hire!"

"I fight for adventure," returned Stanford indifferently. "But that's something you could never understand."

"Oh, no doubt I am dull, compared with you, Señor Stanford. But perhaps I can tell you one thing you did not know. Are you aware that here in Mexico we are not managed by law and lawyers as in your charming country? Hence in political emergencies we have many ways of loosening a man's tongue."

Stanford shrugged a contemptuous shoulder.

"Very well, Señor—shrug! *Mas vale ser necio que porfiado!* To-morrow we shall see whether you will prove quite so indifferent, quite so disobliging. I cannot finish this inquiry to-day. I have other duties afoot. Besides, a little time for reflection may give you some common-sense. My man, Iriarte, will explain to you, carefully, what you will face if you persist in your present attitude. The fellow is a specialist in unlocking tongues, Señor Stanford. He could make the dead speak."

IX.

If Iriarte, Mendoza's boasted specialist, was unrivalled in unlocking lips, he was also phenomenally clever at throwing dice—when he could induce any one to gamble with him. To-day, however, the isolation brought on him by the cordial dislike his comrades felt for him did not worry him at all. He was consoled by a strong conviction that he would soon have a subject in hand.

Iriarte was slightly under middle height; but his shoulders were built like a bison's; his neck on no smaller scale. His narrow, cruel eyes shone so viciously that in spite of his fawning manners only a few men

endured him with any patience. There were those few, however, who did tolerate him, for excellent reasons. They were usually among the mighty. Iriarte did not lack for proper valuation.

Therefore, when a reluctant soldier, who especially abhorred him, approached the worthy specialist, and informed him that he, Iriarte, was now in charge of *El Diablo*, and that *El Diablo* was lying in Iriarte's own tent (two sentinels outside), and furthermore handed the expert a note from Mendoza himself, the unlocker of tongues was not surprised. But he was well pleased.

He nodded, read the note, and hurried to the American's side. There, with an admirable wealth of vocabulary, he explained to the fettered Stanford exactly what his, Iriarte's, own special uses were. It gratified the expert immensely that the American's face did not change color; it merely took on grimmer lines.

Off and on all that day, Iriarte told the unreplying captive stories of his skill. He offered the American neither food nor drink. When Stanford savagely demanded both, Iriarte regretted that denial of either liquids or solids must be enforced on those shortly to be subject to "treatment."

"You see, *Señor Americano*, food and drink increase a man's resistive powers. I cannot play so well on your nerves, *Señor*, when you are fed and your thirst slaked. Don't be impatient, *Señor Stanford*. Morning comes soon, and here in my tent you shall have a pretty audience for your endurance, in Major de Ulloa and in our General Mendoza himself."

Still unreplying, Stanford turned his head aside. The thought of bodily torture to-morrow troubled him less than the mental agony he already endured in the hideous revelation of his misplaced confidence and love. Through the long watches of the night he lay awake, the storm-centre of bitterness, humiliation, anguish, and despair.

When gray dawn broke, he welcomed it. The sooner the whole matter was over, the better. He realized that Mendoza had fully resolved to give his prisoner no faintest chance of escape. All night long a sentinel had watched at the cot's foot, while Iriarte snored comfortably on a blanket, and the other two sentinels were on guard outside. As soon as dawn came, the tent-watcher gave Iriarte a prod with his foot.

"Wake up, you son of a she-fiend," grunted the sentinel. "Bad as the American is, God may pity him for being in your hands!"

Iriarte waked, yawned, rose, and dismissed the sentinel. He then got his own breakfast. He ate it in calm enjoyment of the hunger he knew his prisoner must feel. An hour later, with unctuous satisfaction, the specialist received Mendoza and Major de Ulloa. The expert's tent was large—he was a privileged individual. It contained a heavy bench and two boxes which served as chairs. The boxes he offered to his visi-

tors, who seated themselves. This was Iriarte's period of importance, and it repaid him for much.

It is perhaps well for most of us that we do not realize how much our courage is the result of hot blood and a happy ignorance of the depths of the perils which we defy. Again and again Stanford had encountered danger. Again and again he had passed unhurt where other men had fallen. He had almost come to believe in his star of Lucky Escape. Even now, when he sat stripped to the waist, bound and helpless, on the bench in the centre of the tent, the American felt no fear; rather a stern satisfaction in the knowledge of his own courage.

X.

IRIARTE regarded the prisoner's composure with an appreciative glance. This was the kind of subject he approved.

The sight of pain slowly but surely conquering a noble will was the expert's finest realization of rapture. He had had an excellent training for his present ability to enjoy the torture he inflicted. Born of a mother who had been so cruelly kicked and abused that she turned brute herself, Iriarte came into the world with his soul considerably awry. When grown, only his keen measure of cunning kept him from acts of illegal cruelty which would have jailed him; but his foresight saved him from these: he tortured only where the torturer was safe.

Like all experts, his light did not long remain hidden under a bushel. Iriarte was consulted, then used, by the police of his native town in administering energetic forms of the "third degree." No sooner had they discovered that to put a man in Iriarte's hands meant to make him plastic to confession, than they reported his talents to those "higher up." The expert, so quietly fawning, so discreet of tongue, found himself passing up from one master to another, until he reached the service of Mendoza; in which Iriarte was well content. There he passed as a soldier, although he invariably skulked in the rear of all engagements—a discretion which was duly overlooked. Iriarte was too valuable to lose.

And now, as his sinuous, agile fingers slipped appraisingly along the splendid muscles lying under the firm, satiny skin of the American, Iriarte knew very well how little Catherine de Zarate had really accomplished, how much remained to his skill. She had trapped the man's body; but it depended on him, Iriarte, to tear from the recesses of the American's resolute soul the priceless secrets entrenched there. Never had the specialist gone more thoughtfully about his work.

Iriarte had no small degree of medical education. He had spent two years under the tuition of a drunken but highly competent nerve-specialist. In scientific training as to the whole great nerve-system that

feeds the human body with ecstasy or with anguish, Iriarte was no novice.

Neither was he a mean inventor; he had ingenious instruments of his own devising. And he had planned them for cumulative effects.

Mendoza smoked on voluminously. Now and then he glanced, with gloomy curiosity, at his prisoner. Iriarte's "treatments" were not pleasant to the Mexican general, although he had steeled himself against the sight of them, particularly when, as now, high issues were at stake.

In a corner of the tent, Iriarte's hairless dog, the one living thing which cared for the specialist, scratched peevishly. Something in the ugly little creature had appealed to Iriarte. He had not only spared it, but had been kind to it; chiefly because he was shrewd enough to realize that a faithful dog was a valuable protection. Indeed, the animal had already justified this belief by twice saving his agreeable master.

Presently Stanford, his mind on that scene in the ruins, felt his consciousness seized by a long tendril of physical pain, and drawn delicately but persistently by that, and by yet other tendrils, to the fact that he was now suffering acutely. His lips curled scornfully; his steady eyes returned with indifference Mendoza's inquiring glance.

The General moved impatiently; then, taking up some papers he had brought with him, he began glancing through them. Iriarte silently, delicately, persistently, worked on. Stanford suddenly became aware that he needed badly to fix his mind on something outside of himself—something not relative to these red hot needles which seemed to be exploring every nerve in his body. A blinding pain too, born of a tourniquet applied around his temples, a pain quite unlike the nerve-torture but working in collusion with it, surged in his head. Instinct tried to assert its right to writhe away from the tools in Iriarte's sinuous hands. Stanford hastily decided to watch the hairless dog, and so forget himself. He fastened his gaze on the rusty little creature. It scratched steadily on. The fleas were exasperating it. As it scratched, it gave vent to a little, nasty, persistent, whining sound that began to seem to Stanford to be part of Iriarte's work.

The pain increased; changing to waves that, like an incoming tide, grew stronger with each advance. Stanford stared resolutely at the dog. But he knew now that it was taking all his self-control not to give his muscles play and let them try, as they desperately wanted to do, to break the stout ropes holding him. They could not be burst, he knew that, and Stanford set his lips in a grim resolve to tolerate, with soldierly quietude, the intolerable. But Iriarte was no amateur. Scarcely had the American adjusted himself to the measure of agony he was enduring, when Iriarte steadily, though by degrees, increased it. Stanford learned with dismayed astonishment that he was in the hands of a man who knew how to command limitless areas of exquisite pain; that no matter how

much a man's will endured, Iriarte could always ask it to bear yet a little more.

The American began to curse inwardly his star of Lucky Escape. But for that infernal luck of his in living, he might now have been lying under the decent grass. How could he ever have thought it a shame when fellow soldiers died? They were safe from agony like this. Already it seemed to him that he had been forever in Iriarte's hands.

He stared on at the dog. After a while it stopped scratching and returned his stare; seemingly with a kind of malicious intelligence. Stanford fought desperately to regard the animal fixedly. But suddenly an increase of anguish drove him away from all subterfuges. His face whitened to a ghastly pallor, his mouth and lips grew dry as if with a week's thirst. Iriarte bent afresh to his work. A groan escaped the American. The sound of his own voice shocked Stanford. It lifted him into a yet higher courage. Whatever he suffered, there must be silence.

At the sound of Stanford's muttered groan, Mendoza instantly dropped his papers. "Señor," he urged eagerly, "won't you yield now? There is absolutely no use in your suffering like this."

"I am not suffering, curse you!" gasped the American. As he spoke, a great tidal wave of agony lunged at his heart; the world became a red blot of hideous pain. Then a beautiful thing happened: the sea of pain receded; for a wide, immeasurable, velvet peace drove it back. He vaguely felt himself sinking easily, deliciously, into a strange tranquillity. Oblivion followed.

XI.

IN all the excitement of the day succeeding her clever capture, there was no lack of praise for Catherine de Zarate on the part of an always voluble soldiery. They indulged in a thousand extravagant flatteries touching her taking of *El Diablo*.

But night came at last. In her tent she undressed slowly, drew on her white nightgown, and, sitting before her mirror, which she was by no means soldier enough to forego, braided her long hair.

This done, she still sat there, gazing vacantly into the mirror. It was nearly half an hour before she rose and dropped on her knees beside her cot to pray. But her thoughts refused to ascend to the Almighty. They dwelt instead on the lean, powerful face and the bitter eyes of her recent captive.

Whatever his fate, nothing would happen to him until Diaz himself sentenced him; for the President had ordered *El Diablo* taken alive, if possible, and sent on to him personally. Mendoza himself had told her that. Since her own work on Stanford was done, she might as well put this murderer out of her mind forever. Reason said this. Hate

endorsed it. But a blind instinct, unreasoning, unhating, persisted in keeping before her a vision of a countenance whose love and manly tenderness must have been only a rotten mask. Again she seemed to see Stanford sitting at her feet. Again she felt the clasp of his warm, strong hands, the touch of his firm, red lips on her fingers.

All night she tossed wretchedly, hating herself for her unsoldierly conduct. Other women had played heroic parts in war and had been torn by no foolish wakefulness. If Jael ever had any regret over the nail in Sisera's temple, deponent had failed, in the old chronicles, to remark it.

She resolved to be as joyful as Jael. But dawn came and found her sleepless, weary and heavy-eyed. Listlessly she rose, and bathed with fresh water brought by her perpetual guard, old Pereira. The latter always slept outside her tent, in a kind of kennel of his own construction.

She cooked a soldierly breakfast for the old man and herself. This over, she washed their few dishes. Then, glad of the distraction, she hurried to her self-appointed task of nursing the sick and wounded.

She had finished with her first patient, and was proceeding to the tent of another, when old Pereira, trotting in the rear with her basket of medicines and dressing, said grumblingly:

"Those who furnish the bull for the bull-fight should not be barred from the show! Should they, *Señorita*?"

"There are no bull-fights here, Pereira. A good thing, too. They're silly, wicked, useless torture."

"But not all torture is useless," retorted the old man, so significantly that his mistress started, stopped, and turned round on him.

"What do you mean? Speak plainly!"

"That they bait our bull in Iriarte's tent. I say 'our,' for did n't I even have to make myself into a twin sister of myself to help you net him, *Señorita*? Should n't part of the credit be mine? And yet they even expect us to pretend we don't know what they're doing!"

"Do you mean—are you talking of my prisoner—of Don Stanford?" gasped the girl.

"But assuredly, *Señorita*."

"You can't mean—you can't possibly mean—that they are torturing him?"

"Why not? In my day such things were done publicly. And they taught lessons, good lessons, to the youth looking on. Now the torture is hidden. Only hanging and shooting are public. But death does n't try a man's metal like torture, *Señorita*. Pouf! Death's soon over; while torture—— *Grace a Dios, Señorita mio!* where are you going?"

"To Iriarte's tent!"

She was gone like a lapwing. Old Pereira looked sulkily after her.

"Now she will see it all! Enjoy it all! While I would be arrested if I but stuck in my nose. *Per Dios*, I'd not even have known what

was going on if I had n't heard a soldier talking of the General's note to that fiend of an Iriarte, and had n't seen Mendoza himself going to the tent this morning! It was plain that *El Diablo* would be in for a pleasant time—and serve him rightly enough! He's but a heretic. God consign all heretics to Iriarte's fingers! *Carramba!* She's entering the tent already."

XII.

CATHERINE was indeed entering without ceremony Iriarte's tent. The scene that met her eyes shocked her into a moment's inaction. In that moment the fettered figure sitting upright on the bench pitched forward into the arms of Iriarte.

Supporting the dead weight against him, the specialist said with some irritation:

"He has fainted, my General! Always they faint, or it would not take so long to break their wills."

"My God!" exclaimed the girl, whose swift, noiseless advent had not been noticed. "You *have* tortured him! And to death!"

Mendoza sprang to his feet, swallowing an oath of annoyance. Major de Ulloa rose slowly. Iriarte stared, over Stanford's relaxed shoulders, at this unwelcome interference. Mendoza promptly recovered himself.

"Pardon me, *belle militaire*, but you should n't break into a soldier's tent in this abrupt fashion! A man bare to the waist is hardly a sight for you."

"I am a nurse as well as a soldier," she retorted hotly. "I have seen too many torso wounds, and helped to dress them, for you to hint at any immodesty on my part. I came in quickly to stop what should never have been begun. No matter how low he is, he can't be low enough to torture. No criminal can be. And you have killed him!"

"Will the Señorita pardon me?" interposed Iriarte subserviently. "Don Stanford is far from dead. He has merely fainted."

"Then, get him to that cot at once!" commanded Catherine. Waiting no permission, she stepped forward behind Stanford and slipped her strong young arms under his; so releasing Iriarte, who glanced up interrogatively at General Mendoza.

"Do as the Señorita says," muttered Mendoza, smothering his rage. "De Ulloa, help them, will you?" And Juan de Ulloa instantly obeyed; secretly delighted at Mendoza's evident discomfiture.

Iriarte promptly undid the ropes. The three laid Herrick Stanford on the cot. His hands and feet were still carefully fettered; just as Catherine had seen him in the tent of Mendoza. Only, then the fierce gray eyes had spent intolerable scorn on her; now they were closed.

But to Catherine's relief the rise and fall of the arched chest pro-

claimed that Iriarte was right. The prisoner was not dead. Blue discolorations from Iriarte's tourniquet were stamped on his temples; significant sign manuals of Iriarte's inventions emphasized the point of several nerve-centres on the body. Yet except for the fact of Stanford's loss of consciousness, there was not much to betray to a casual glance what the American had undergone. Iriarte was too sincere an artist for that.

But Catherine intuitively guessed to what an intolerable point pain must have come to deprive Stanford of his senses. The thought sickened her. She turned, much too haughtily, to Mendoza.

"You must promise me, General Mendoza, not to touch him again."

Mendoza was acutely irritated. It was he, not she, who should be striking the dominant note. He set his teeth together and told himself that, passionately as he craved this woman, he craved still more the humbling of her. When he had done all that he meant to do, she could never again look at him with that clear, fearless self-possession. But this was not the hour for asserting himself. Conquering his annoyance, he said suavely:

"Who commands here, *belle militaire*—you or I?"

"You, certainly! But a prisoner has some rights."

Mendoza glanced at her, then turned to Iriarte.

"Get the man into a jacket," he said shortly. This Iriarte promptly did; being careful, however, to refetter his captive's hands. The proprieties thus amended, Mendoza was again about to address Catherine de Zarate, when the life in Herrick Stanford's singularly well endowed body regained the plane of consciousness. He stirred, moaned, opened his eyes, involuntarily struggled up to a sitting posture, and dropped his feet to the floor of the tent. He waked to a splitting headache, a surging sense of weakness, nausea, and throbbing nerves. But the unbearable had ceased. His clarity of thought promptly returned.

Catherine looked thankfully at him; being illogical enough to feel grateful that he had recovered and might now perish after a more approved military fashion. If he was cognizant of her presence, he in no way showed it, as he said coolly to Mendoza:

"I don't remember my transfer to this cot. I suppose I was uncivil enough to faint, and cause your familiar there some delay. I'm at your service—if you care to waste your time further."

Catherine interposed: "He is my prisoner, general!"

"Indeed!" observed Mendoza slowly.

"Yes. You may shoot him, if you like; but the use of torture is for devils!"

Mendoza flushed. Iriarte shot a malignant glance at her. But it was Herrick Stanford who answered:

"I've occupied quite enough of your loving care lately, Señorita

de Zarate. If it's only my affairs that keep you here, may I ask you to leave them to General Mendoza?"

"I never dreamed of such a horror as torturing a prisoner! I'd rather you had gone free!" declared the girl passionately.

"You are very considerate! I have no doubt you thought you were trapping me into a friendly refuge—there being a price on my head, and Mexico being noted for her delicacy in handling prisoners. If I have any rights as a prisoner, may I exercise them all in the single request that you leave me?"

Mendoza interposed:

"The Señorita de Zarate is in earnest, however little you may believe it. Her word is my law. You are safe, Don Stanford, at her intercession, from anything except such military sentence as our invincible *Presidente* may pass on you. To-morrow I shall send you to Diaz."

A great thrill of relief shot through Herrick Stanford; but his impassive face did not change. Diaz would shoot him; but what was death compared to torture such as he had endured?

Catherine turned gratefully to Mendoza.

"A thousand thanks, my general! I should have suffered horribly if through me a man had died on the rack. I'm not very soldierly, I'm afraid."

Mendoza bowed gallantly.

"You are all the more charming, Señorita, for your pretty regrets over even *El Diablo*. And now will you return with me and Major de Ulloa to my tent? We must take counsel concerning an errand in which you and the Major may have to be co-workers."

XIII.

CATHERINE did not find in absence from the camp the pleasure she had expected. Reluctance to leave, inexplicable to herself, possessed her. Against her will, she found her thoughts still with her prisoner. She became conscious of a strange feeling that she knew two Stanfords: her father's assassin, whom she was loyally bound to hate, and another Stanford, who, unexplainably, seemed free from this horror of treachery.

She despised herself for even supposing this American murderer could have a higher side, could be of any interest to her beyond the preservation of the common humanities. Yet she continued to revert to that last scene in camp, to hear again the American's voice—until in sheer desperation she turned to her companion and tried to dismiss any remembrance of Stanford by such flattering attention to Major de Ulloa's conversation that her escort trembled with pleasure.

They had been sent by Mendoza as dispatch-bearers to a certain point.

This arrangement had filled Major de Ulloa with happiness. But his saturnine face had not betrayed this to Mendoza. The latter still believed his *ami damné* as indifferent to Catherine as he had been before ever seeing her.

But the Major's concealed passion had only augmented for being stifled. As Catherine deliberately and somewhat unjustifiably coquetted with him on their ride, his hatred of Mendoza proportionately increased.

At last there surged at his lips something which wisdom told him to swallow undelivered. But when did wisdom fail to be worsted in a combat with love?

The more charming Catherine grew in her mental unhappiness, the more the Castilian burned to use the powerful weapon in his reserve. True if he did use it he would run a frightful risk. Let Mendoza learn what he was on the verge of doing, and Juan de Ulloa's days would be numbered.

Yet she might well keep his confidence. If she—what a splendid *coup*!

And if Major de Ulloa did *not* use this fortune-bestowed weapon, Mendoza, famous and wealthy, could not fail to win this lovely enthusiast.

At the bare thought of Catherine in Mendoza's possession, the Castilian turned pale with a mixture of jealousy and hate which made him physically ill. He looked at Catherine as she rode. She had never seemed so beautiful. Certainly she had never before been so kind.

Juan de Ulloa spoke abruptly:

"What is the greatest sin in the world, *Señorita*?"

Catherine looked her surprise at the sudden inquiry; but she answered instantly:

"Treachery."

"It was to punish treachery you entered the toils of a soldier's life—no?"

"*Si, Señor!* You are in General Mendoza's confidence. You know that."

"Treachery—the greatest sin in the world!" repeated Juan de Ulloa musingly. His eyes were on Catherine's flushing, mobile face.

"Could there be any forgiveness for it, *Señorita*?"

"Who forgave Judas? He could n't even forgive himself."

"And treachery is hard to place, *Señorita*. If it were not cunning, if it were not in unexpected places, one might combat it."

"But it does get unmasked. *El Diablo* never counted on my father's living to dictate that letter; yet he did live to sign it. Ah, *Señor*, let us talk of less sad things. I have put aside my natural womanhood. I have trapped my father's murderer. I have delivered him to justice. It was cruelly hard for a girl to do—only my father's wish carried me through. Now I want to forget!"

Juan de Ulloa was silent. The struggle within continued. On one side was his physical safety; on the other, his love. But Catherine's charm was never at better advantage than in this ride alone together. No influence was present to distract the Castilian's absorption in her. Every glance of her eye, the very turn of her soft white throat, spurred him to annihilate Mendoza.

At last he said slowly:

"You want to forget? Perhaps I can help you. I can tell you a story, *Señorita*, which will at least make you forget all sadness. It will rouse—other emotions. Would you like that?"

She stared. "You phrase it curiously. But by all means the story."

"Not many men would tell it to a girl, *Señorita*. For if I tell it to you, I put my life in your hands."

"Your life?"

"Should Mendoza know I told you——"

"If it's betraying a secret of his which he confided to you, don't tell it."

"He never confided it to me. My conscience is clear on that score. Yet I repeat, if you were to betray my confidence, I should undoubtedly count my days as numbered. Yet, *Señorita*, so great is my trust in you, that I am about to risk all—to please you."

"Risk all—to please me! You are very odd, *Señor de Ulloa*. But tell me. I'll keep your confidence. I swear I will." Catherine's curiosity was roused. Already she was sufficiently interested to have a real distraction, a real change of thought. She grasped for a continuance of so pleasant a diversion.

"You swear it? Have you no crucifix?"

Catherine nodded gravely. She drew from her bosom a carved ivory crucifix to which many a dying Mexican soldier had clung. "My father gave me this."

"Repeat your oath on it."

Faintly amused at all this solemnity, the girl swore, then gave her undivided attention to Juan de Ulloa.

XIV.

MAJOR DE ULLOA began in a low, steady tone, his eyes on his mount's ears:

"Once upon a time—that's the way all tales should begin, I believe—there lived a very beautiful girl in a Mexican hacienda. She was admired by every man who saw her. It was natural enough that a certain general should seek her hand in marriage. It was equally natural that the girl should be in no haste to marry. She found the general not to her liking, and she rejected him. Now, he had been used to easy

conquests. This rejection filled him with rage. He came back a second time. A second time the girl rejected him—so pointedly that he nearly burst from anger. You realize, *Señorita*, possibly from experience, that such situations can occur?"

Catherine blushed and laughed a little. The story made her remember how General Mendoza had puffed and swelled over her second rejection of him.

Juan de Ulloa continued: "The General went back to his men. He had to fight; but he made up his jealous mind that all's fair in love as well as in war. Not long after, the girl's father, a gallant soldier, was mortally wounded. Being near to death, he dictated a letter to his daughter and then signed it."

Catherine started. Her eyes, slightly dilated, turned full on Juan de Ulloa. He continued, his own gaze still on his horse's ears:

"During the dictation there was no one in the tent except the dying soldier and the general. But just outside there was a listener. He was reprehensible, perhaps, this listener; but frankly he feared something—he hardly knew what—for the dying man. This wounded captain had been the listener's friend, and once had saved his life. Do you blame the rescued man for a little stratagem?"

"No, no, *Señor*—no, no," gasped the girl. "Only, go on!"

"So this friend of the dying captain heard the whole dictation. Then the general came out of his tent and went back to his own quarters. There the listener, whom we will call a major, met him. The major waited for the general to tell him all about the letter; but the general said nothing—except that the captain was now dead."

Catherine shivered. Her great eyes, wider still, never left the Castilian's face.

"But two days later the general called his aide-de-camp, the major, and showed him the dead captain's dictated letter—with the dead captain's signature. *Señorita*, it was not the same letter!"

"*Not the same letter!*" The girl's dry lips could hardly form the words.

"No; it was another letter."

"Another!"

"Then the major understood. This rejected lover had made himself all-powerful. Understanding the girl's generous, sweetly fiery nature, he meant to revenge himself on her by using her as his political tool. Do you follow me, *Señorita*?" Juan de Ulloa suddenly turned his eyes full on her white face.

"I don't know—yet. Go on! Oh, please go on!"

"This clever general! Oh, he is extremely clever, *Señorita*! All the more because he hesitates at nothing where his own ends are concerned. He had written another letter and forged to it the dead captain's

signature. It was an amazingly good forgery. You would have admired it, *Señorita!*"

"Ah, finish! Finish! I want to know all."

"You shall. The clever general, with his gracious airs and flourishes, took home the captain's sword and the forged letter."

"But the other letter—the real——"

"The astute forger tore it up. Alas, that so clever a man should make the mistake of not burning it! It cost the major a whole afternoon to dig those fragments out of the general's waste-basket and piece them out with the help of some clear glue. But when the major's work was done, the letter was complete. Would you like to see it, *Señorita?*"

She checked her horse.

"God in Heaven, yes! As quickly as possible! To forge the name of the dead! The general my father trusted. Oh, it is unbelievable!"

Juan de Ulloa stopped his own horse, and drew out and handed to her the pieced letter. "Unbelievable but for this," he retorted coolly.

Dropping her reins, she took it and read swiftly:

MY DARLING CATHERINE:

I am meeting a soldier's end. When this reaches you, I shall be gone. As soon as you can, leave this distracted country, and go to your mother's people in Virginia. Sell your jewels, if necessary, and take Gertrudis with you.

I die in peace and the hope of immortality. Bear no hatred to my enemies. I died in fair fight, and they support the right as they see it.

For the last time I sign myself,

Thy loving father,

ALVAREZ DE ZARATE

"Contrast his natural simplicity of phrase with the vicious sensationalism Mendoza cleverly used in the letter he forged," observed Juan de Ulloa quietly.

XV.

CATHERINE flung herself from her saddle. Couched on a bank of grass, she spread out on the ground the letter she had just finished. Then she drew from her blouse the letter Mendoza had brought her, and put it beside the newly read sheet.

At last, "Come here," she said slowly.

Major de Ulloa made haste to join her, the horses peacefully cropping. He bent eagerly over the letter to which Catherine's forefinger pointed:

"There is your justification, your best witness, Major de Ulloa. See that little mark above the signature of the letter you rescued? That mark is—or was—my dear father's secret sign, for which I should have searched the other signature. My heart was too full to think of it."

Juan de Ulloa looked attentively at the dragon-like curlycue above the signature:

"I thought it was only a mistake in beginning, accounted for by the failing eyesight of a dying man."

"No, it is perfect. He told me *always* to look for it. But even if I had missed it, I should have thought that in dying he forgot it. That first letter was, as you say, a forgery. I am stunned. I can't even think!"

She pressed her hands to her forehead. Major de Ulloa looked at her anxiously. Behind them, in the ensuing silence, the contented horses cropped at the sweet grass.

"Any girl in your position would have been deceived," he comforted.

She looked up at him piteously.

"Oh, what a fool, what a fool, I have been! This *El Diablo*—this man I was told to think a murderer, an assassin——"

"Is a good deal more of a gentleman than the magnificent Mendoza," sneered Juan de Ulloa, who was not in the least afraid of the American as a rival.

"Where were my senses? To be played with so!"

"I tell you Mendoza's scheme would have tricked any one."

"I don't know. I don't know anything. Yes, I know this: I shall ride back to camp this moment, and tell General Mendoza exactly what a——"

Juan de Ulloa turned white with dismay. He sprang forward and caught her wrist.

"Are you no better than Mendoza? Are you too a liar? Did n't you promise to keep my secret? Do you want me shot on some trumped-up charge by Mendoza? Have you already forgotten your oath?"

She shrank back. He released her.

"I had forgotten. Of course I won't betray you."

He looked at her anxiously, already regretting what he had done.

"I hope not."

"I am ashamed of that moment's forgetting," she said humbly. "Won't you forgive me?"

Juan de Ulloa smiled in relief. "Certainly—if you'll forgive me for not telling you sooner. I'll be honest with you, Catherine. I had to know you well before I dared to trust you with my life."

She picked up the letters. Slow tears were rolling down her white cheeks.

"Who am I to talk of forgiving any one when, like Judas, I can't forgive myself! What must I do, Major de Ulloa? I can't even think. Direct me!"

Juan de Ulloa answered decisively: "We must finish our errand—for the sake of my neck. Your prisoner is safe for the present."

XVI.

BACK at the tent of the interrupted Iriarte the afternoon slipped gently into dusk. Little creatures of the grass bestirred themselves and murmured a contented chorus. Then the moon, now waxed into fullest effulgence, rose whitely. The American, still pale and badly shaken, but in comparative ease, lay stretched on his cot. His hands and feet were still manacled. Mendoza was taking no chances.

Stanford drank in eagerly the sweetly increasing coolness of the night. Presently a fresh access of air reached him, as Iriarte lifted the flap and entered.

"Good evening, Don Stanford."

"If you had the kind of evening I wish you, you spawn of the devil, you'd roast on a pitchfork."

Iriarte gave a deprecatory shrug. He continued:

"General Mendoza changes his headquarters to-night. It is to be my pleasure to companion the *Señor Americano* on the night ride. Your horse stands ready. Here is a stimulant—if the Don Stanford will allow me to hold it to his lips; as his hands are fastened behind him."

Stanford sat up and nodded. He swallowed the draft at a gulp. As soon as Iriarte had unfettered his ankles, Herrick rose and followed his guide. Presently he found himself under the clear skies, riding as he had thought never to ride again.

It was dawn before they arrived at the new headquarters—a huge family mansion, of astonishingly thick walls, deserted recently by its terrified owners. There was a forbidding air to the sad, gray walls. Their depth and seclusion seemed to protest against intruders. Iriarte was not unfamiliar with the house. Politely requesting his captive to dismount, he led the American into the very heart of the wide building; then ushered him, with many little subservient airs, into a comfortably furnished room. Evidently this was once the "den" of a student. The room had no outside windows, being cooled and ventilated like a cellar. It was lighted, even in the day, by a lamp suspended from the ceiling. This lamp Iriarte promptly lighted. Then he addressed his captive, who had seated himself on a heavy divan.

"Here, Señor, the late Don Enrico found peace and opportunity for much winter writing. No vulgar outdoor sounds, no household noises, filtered in here. Would it amuse the *Señor Americano* to hear what became of the former owners?"

"Am I to be continuously shackled in this absurd way?" demanded Stanford savagely, giving an angry wrench at his hand-cuffs.

"It is a compliment to the Señor Stanford. Few men have been more closely watched. Remember you are famous for escapes, Señor. Remember, too, the price on your head!"

"The equivalent of five thousand dollars," muttered Stanford.

"Yet the Señorita scorned it."

Stanford was silent for a moment; then he said in a low voice:

"You mean she would n't touch the reward?"

"Not a penny of it. I am glad the Señor finds *something* interesting in my conversation."

As he spoke, he produced from a satchel on his shoulders the iron anklets and chain which Herrick had already worn. The American was silent. He was struggling with a savage desire to kick Iriarte across the room; but he knew the guard would be called in, and he himself would be chained by waist as well as feet.

He was about to ask his detested attendant whether he was to have any breakfast at all, when the door opened, and Mendoza, with the graceful dignity which sat so well on him, entered the room, followed by a soldier bearing a tray.

The man set this on the centre table and withdrew. Hungry as Herrick Stanford was for the smoking coffee and cakes, he paid no heed to the food.

The Mexican spoke abruptly: "I have brought my breakfast to share with you. I can have Iriarte feed you; or if you will give me your word of honor not to attempt violence, I will loose your hands for an hour."

"Much as I should enjoy having that carrion crow feed me," returned Stanford dryly, "I will dispense with him. Let me eat my breakfast in peace, and I'll do no violence. *Parole d'honneur.*"

Iriarte reluctantly released the hands of the American, comforted by the fact that the prisoner was still secured by the ankle chains.

XVII.

BREAKFAST over, Stanford accepted one of Mendoza's cigars. It was during the consumption of this that the Mexican said slowly:

"After all, Señor, what can our political affairs be to a stranger? You know how firmly Diaz is entrenched. You know the real hopelessness of Madero's cause."

"I know nothing of the sort." Stanford tilted his head to watch a smoke-ring curl upward. "I think Madero will win."

Mendoza flushed and scowled.

"But if I set you over the border, Señor, with a fortune in your pocket, can you not give me the information I ask?"

"Once for all, General Mendoza, do I look like that sort of beast? I don't want to be insulted with such an offer again. You seem to be a poor judge of men."

The Spaniard shot a haughty glance at him. For a few moments

Mendoza was silent, eying Stanford keenly; then he looked at his watch and said softly: "Your parole will soon be out, Señor. I think Iriarte may replace your hand-cuffs."

The American threw away his cigar. Mendoza rose from the table and drew it away from his captive.

Stanford could scarcely suppress a shudder of disgust as he felt Iriarte's clutch on his wrists. The latter made haste to draw them together and to snap the hand-cuffs; this time fettering them in front.

Mendoza, sitting a little apart, smoked on. He finished a second cigar before he said, in a very ordinary tone of voice:

"You are too much a man of the world, Don Stanford, to suppose that in regard to you I shall be guilty of the folly of heeding the capricious wishes of a spoiled beauty?"

Herrick Stanford involuntarily started. He felt that he lost color. His heart gave an ugly throb of terror as he answered in a steady, indifferent tone:

"I don't understand you."

"I mean this, Señor: there's a difference in women. Some love jewels; some, power. But both are alike in this: to gain what we will of them, we must first give them what *they* wish. I have not yet obtained certain favors from *la belle militaire*; consequently, I am forced to humor her. Apparently, I yielded to her yesterday. But in reality—no! *Per Dios*, I shall do what I like with my own—now that I have her safely out of the way."

"Then when you promised her not to torture me, you meant to break your word?"

Mendoza shrugged. "As we all break them to women! Come, Señor, you have had experience of that yourself."

"I have not, you yellow cur! I am an American."

A flash of temper rose viciously to Mendoza's face. He instantly suppressed it.

"Señor, you are inexcusably brutal in your language; but your situation protects you."

"I'm glad to know I'm protected!"

Mendoza rose. As he did so, the American, who could stand close to the heavy chair, sprang up, facing him. In the background Iriarte leered, listened, and waited provocatively, rubbing his long fingers together.

"You again have a choice, Señor. Give me such information as I know you can furnish, and go free; or refuse me the information until Iriarte wrings it out of you—as he surely will."

"He can't wring it out of me. You'll find that, you infernal liar. My tongue is my own."

"As good men as you have said that, Don Stanford. But under

Iriarte's treatment your nerves will give way. You may bear it for a few days; then your mind will weaken and fail you. We are all mere creatures of the nerve-cells, Señor Stanford. When agony destroys them and your mind, you will babble out the very secrets you are willing now to wreck yourself to protect."

"It's true you may torture me into sheer idiocy—I understand that condition often follows such work as you have begun on me," returned the American steadily. "But it does *not* follow that my ravings will betray any military secrets. On the contrary, it is most improbable."

Mendoza shrugged:

"We shall see!"

XVIII.

HERRICK STANFORD walked in a far country. It was desert, and wherever he set foot there were only sand-dunes that ran red hot. Overhead were branches of thorns, thorns longer than stilettos. These thorns were blown by a hot wind against him. They stabbed into his breast and heart and brain. Then the solid earth gave way, and he sank, lanced with agony, into a pitchy sea. The waters scorched his temples and his dried mouth. They dashed against his body and drove out all sense of everything but an anguish grown so intolerable that it shocked him back into his senses. Passing from pain's delirium to intelligence, he turned on Iriarte a gray, drawn face; then laughed as he had laughed once before under torture.

"He's going to be too much for you, Iriarte," said Mendoza angrily. "Twice he has laughed at you."

But the specialist shook his head.

"*El que rie al último se rie de todos, General mio.* Have patience! He is wonderfully endowed with mental and physical strength; but there's an end to human endurance. He shall give way—I, Iriarte, promise you."

Another half-hour passed. At the end of it the American gasped, his gray eyes glazed with pain.

"Water—for God's sake!"

Mendoza instantly came to him, signing to the reluctant Iriarte to stop his work. The Spanish general held the glass to Stanford's lips, and Herrick drained it. Reaching over to the table, Mendoza took up a wet napkin and wiped the cold sweat from the American's forehead, the bloody foam from his bitten lips.

"Señor," he urged persuasively and sympathetically, "I am sorry for you. *Val gamedios*—this is awful. Be reasonable, while you still have reason."

Stanford raised his haggard, tense face.

"Tell your fellow to begin again," he retorted hoarsely. But a voice clear, fearless, passionately angry, rang out behind them:

"Stop! Oh, you cowards, you *cowards*!"

Mendoza whirled around. The startled Iriarte dropped his most valued invention.

In the next second Catherine de Zarate bent over the mission chair.

"Speak to me! What have they done to you, Herrick? Oh, why did I trust him?"

Stanford's tortured, heaving chest drew a long sigh that ran, like a shudder, through his whole frame. He was stupid with suffering; exhausted almost to the point of another swoon by continuous nerve shock. But he answered Catherine de Zarate by gasping:

"When I complain to you of my hurts—it—will be time enough—for you to concern yourself about them."

She turned to Mendoza.

"General Mendoza, you *promised* me! You broke your promise! It's only just, now, that you give me this man to guard, myself."

Mendoza trembled with sheer fury. However, foresight and self-control came to his aid.

"You are unjust, *belle militaire*, in thinking I have broken my promise to you. Iriarte here—the lying scoundrel!—brought me, as he declared, a message from you, given him when you got to saddle at the old camp. He said that you released me from any promise not to torture the American. He added that you realized I would do it only for the good of Mexico, and as a necessary war measure." He turned to Iriarte. "Did n't you, you scoundrel?"

Iriarte rolled his small eyes up piously.

"*Ay di mi!* My general, I regret infinitely the lie I told! May the punishment be light. It was for Mexico that I lied. I could not believe that the Señorita de Zarate could really care what happened to a pig of an American. I see I have done wrong."

She knew that both men were lying; but her keen wits told her that she must aid Mendoza in saving the dignity of the situation.

She smiled brilliantly, confidingly, at Mendoza, and with such apparently guileless acceptance of his fabrication that he was completely deceived.

"I beg your pardon in all humbleness, my General, for the injustice done you. I might have known a Mendoza could not fail to keep his word."

"You are forgiven, *belle militaire*. But what brought you back so—opportunely? And where is Major de Ulloa? You can hardly have accomplished my errand in such a time as this!"

"Major de Ulloa is dead," said Catherine simply.

Mendoza started.

"Dead? How? I valued De Ulloa. He was one of the few men I could trust."

"We fell into an ambush," explained Catherine quietly. "I got away safely—partly because my mare is the fleetest in this section; partly because they probably hesitated to fire on a woman. Afterwards I rode back, hoping he might be only wounded. He was dead, my General. The papers you trusted us with were gone. There was nothing to do but turn back. As I was about to remount, a peon, a young woman, crept out of the thicket near-by, and warned me that Madero's forces are strung all along the north foot-hills. She had hardly finished when I caught a glimpse of cavalry, perhaps half a mile away, on a hillside. I fled back to camp, found you gone, and followed you here."

"And how did you instantly find your way to this particular room?" Again the girl smiled at him.

"Why, I know the house well, General. I used to play here in childhood. And when one of the sentinels told me you were engaged in the green den, I had no trouble whatever in finding you. And, thanks to the orders you have given, the sentries never bar me."

With a swift, assured step she crossed to Stanford's side. "There is no longer any need of these ropes of Iriarte's." With half a dozen slashes of the keen little dirk she carried, she cut the cords that bound Stanford; although she, of course, could not release him from the manacles he wore.

During the colloquy between Catherine de Zarate and Mendoza, Herick Stanford remained silent.

When Catherine cut the ropes binding him, he did not even glance at her; but when she filled a glass with water, thirst made him accept it, although he would never have asked for it.

Catherine dared not hold the draught to his lips. As his hands were now secured in front of him and the hand-cuff-chain was long enough to give him sufficient use of them to lift the glass, she held it mutely out to him. He took it from her. To the girl's horror, his unnerved fingers could not retain their clasp on the tumbler. It dropped to the floor.

Stanford looked with grim curiosity at his hands; they had always been exceptionally steady.

Then he raised his eyes coolly and with satirical contempt to the girl in front of him.

"Be so good, Señorita de Zarate, as to let your friend and compatriot Iriarte give me some water. He understands better than you how to wait on his patients."

Catherine shrank back, flushing.

Mendoza smiled grimly under his mustache. He signed to Iriarte, who refilled the goblet and held it deftly to his prisoner's lips.

Stanford finished the water, then lay quietly back in his chair. But this time he comprehended perfectly that his torture was merely delayed.

"You won't be hurt again, Señor Stanford. I promise you that!" Catherine made the assurance eagerly.

Stanford lifted his heavy lids.

"Why not?"

"There will be no more misunderstandings."

"There will be unless you take the one road to prevent them—get me shot at once. Mercy I don't ask of you, Señorita de Zarate. I know quite well what your mercies are. But possibly your woman's wits are keen enough to see what your dull General can't—that he's wasting his time on me—unless he does it to please you personally."

"To please me! See, General Mendoza, what a construction he has put on your action! Others might do the same."

The prisoner leaned forward. His face was flushed, his steady eyes blazed on the three before him, as he said slowly, "Catherine de Zarate, if there's any truth in your denial that I've been tortured for your pleasure, if there's an atom of reality in your claim that I'm justly your prisoner, not Mendoza's—then you shan't dare to leave this room till I exact from you the death that's mine by common humanity."

"Silence!" snarled Mendoza. "Your time for talking is past!"

"I'm not addressing you," retorted Stanford fiercely. "Leave the room if you don't want to listen. Señorita de Zarate, if you are not playing these interferences, protect me in the one way left. Give Iriarte your revolver. Let a bullet save me from useless manhandling by these cowards."

"No, no! I can't. You are Diaz's prisoner. I tell you you are safe now. Diaz——"

"Is a myth so far as I'm concerned. And you know it! So surely as you leave me alive in this room, my last breath under torture won't be a cry for ease, but a prayer to God that you shall sink to live as I must when this devil is done with me—without even the reason to know I'm reasonless! Leave me to this if you dare! When all I ask of you is death!"

His gray eyes, flaming through their bloodshot haze, fixed so terribly on her the full appeal of his despair that in answer she turned and clung to Mendoza's sword-arm for the physical support she actually needed.

"I can't listen to him any more. I can't indeed!" she gasped. "Oh, let's go away—quickly."

Mendoza hastened to comply. There was nothing he desired more. In a few moments the green den held only the prisoner and the vulpine shadows of his hopeless future.

XIX.

Two hours later, Catherine was still sitting with Mendoza in the drawing-room of the old house. Perfectly aware now that any withdrawal of hers from the place would mean the renewal of Iriarte's work, she sat inwardly planning how she might get Stanford permanently out of danger; covering her anxious thoughts by coquetting delicately, but definitely, with the man before her.

"*Ma belle militaire*," he said teasingly, in the French phrase he loved, smiling tenderly at her, "I have, then, no cause to be jealous of that lean American? In playing with that treacherous assassin, you did not, as I feared you might, burn your charming fingers?"

"Not I!" Catherine laughed buoyantly. "What!" she added, with winning reproachfulness. "Can't I have a woman's ordinary squeamishness of feeling, a woman's ordinary sense of mercy, but you must have unjust suspicions? Did you try to make me a man in earnest?"

"God forbid!" retorted Mendoza fervently. "I would have you just as you are—and as my wife, my darling!" he added tumultuously, rising as he spoke.

In deep exasperation, Catherine saw he was about to fling himself on his knees beside her. She started up.

"Oh, General, we can't think of love now—while Mexico——"

He interrupted her vehemently. "I can think of nothing *but* love! Catherine, to-morrow you must marry me!"

She put the heavy table between them.

"To-morrow?" she said, and smiled audaciously at him; for suddenly her plans were matured, and she was willing to play with him to the utmost, to keep his suspicions lulled. "To-morrow—what will the army say? No, no, General—no closer! Wait—then—until to-morrow!"

He looked at her, half-minded to express in kisses, whether with or against her will, the tumultuous joy he felt. But instinct warned him to be careful.

"Until to-morrow!" he said, his voice trembling with eagerness. Later, he saw her to her room door, put into her hands a massive key, and told her to turn it.

Then he went to his own room, strangely softened and oddly purified by the sudden opportunity to be his better self. Long into the night he lay awake, thinking of her.

Of Herrick Stanford he now scarcely thought at all. It was enough for the present that his captive was safe in Iriarte's keeping. Not that Mendoza had failed to look in at the American just before he went to bed. He found Iriarte solacing himself with huge drafts of black coffee, as he played sentinel over Stanford. When Mendoza entered the green

den, he saw Stanford himself in a heavy sleep of sheer exhaustion, which the Spaniard's entrance did not disturb.

Mendoza looked scowlingly down on his prisoner, and then went away; but, in reality, he was not meditating on Stanford at all: his thoughts were all of Catherine—and to-morrow.

She was poor in money, poor in influence, which in Mexico often excels gold, but how rich in that bewildering variety of charm which protects a man from the dull satiety most husbands feel! He fell asleep at last, approving his own virtuous resolutions, and dreamed of Catherine with him before a great altar, flushing with alluring modesty as she slipped her small hand into his.

XX.

OUTSIDE the great house sentinels paced. Not far beyond, the army lay encamped around the General's headquarters. But except for some soldiers in the servants' wing, a wounded officer lying upstairs, Catherine de Zarate, Iriarte, and Stanford, Mendoza had, for his own reasons, managed to rid the house of everybody but himself.

The wounded officer could hear no sounds, make no intrusions, so he was welcome to his room. Concerning the rest of his staff, there had been only Juan de Ulloa who could properly appreciate the political necessity of handling a prisoner as Stanford was to be handled; hence Mendoza had invented business afield for his remaining officers. However little Mendoza might value the actual attribute, he had a jealous eye to his own reputation for honor. Therefore, he often preferred headquarters strangely destitute of all those likely to be in too close attendance on his person.

But careless now, in his unconsciousness, of Mendoza or Mendoza's purposes, Herrick Stanford slept the sleep of sheer exhaustion. Then a strange thing happened in the green den. The locked door did not open; instead, a panel, seemingly solid, began to turn on itself, and a girl with troubled eyes slipped gently into the room.

A man's sword, richly chased in gold, swung from her belt. In this belt she had thrust a revolver. She came softly to the sleeping man's side. As she gazed down on him, the light from the chained lamp threw into dark relief the lines which suffering had indented on his resolute face. Noting these, two tears fell from her eyes and dropped to the steel cuffs on the hands resting quietly before him.

Clearing the drops from her lashes, the girl drew from her blouse a small flask filled with wine. She had helped to conceal it several years ago, in the old house. From childhood she had played through the *hacienda*, visiting its now fled inhabitants. She had often been intrusted with its secrets.

The wine (until now forgotten in a stone crypt) she had mixed with a medicine of life-giving stimulation. She poured some of this mixture into a cup brought with the flask. Then, with a sigh that was half a sob, she slipped an arm under Herrick Stanford's head.

He woke, and looked up in confusion. "Drink, Herrick," she said steadily. She pressed the cup against his lips. He drank eagerly. The generous vintage had an almost immediate effect.

He felt curiously refreshed.

"Infelice," he stammered, "how on earth did——" But as he spoke he wrenched at his fettered hands, and the sentence was never finished. Memory rushed at him. Under her bitter presentations, the tender light in his gray eyes fled; they hardened. As Catherine de Zarate drew back, he fixed on her a look so contemptuous that she dropped the cup.

"Don't kill me with such a look again, Herrick! Have a little, only a little patience."

He smiled—a very ugly smile. "Have you poured another narcotic down my throat?"

She looked at him mutely; her eyes dilated with misery. Then, without further argument, she knelt at his feet and with the keys taken from the drugged Iriarte's belt (he had himself taught her how to narcotize coffee) she unlocked the steel from Stanford's ankles.

He watched her cynically. This was evidently only some new treachery, some fresh out-holding of a kindness later to be withdrawn; that he might be weakened in will by hope deferred.

XXI.

As soon as Catherine de Zarate had freed Stanford's ankles, she rose, bent over his hands, and released them also. Under his still incredulous eyes, she laid on his knees the loaded revolver.

He seized it, broke it, spilled the cartridges into his hand, reloaded it, snapped it together, and let his right forefinger rest lovingly on the trigger. It was an automatic, carrying nine shots.

Catherine had moved away from him. He sprang to his feet (his chains had been too loose for any injury to the circulation) and stared at the girl before him:

"It's really loaded!" he muttered.

She understood what fear of her treachery his words implied; but her only reply was to unbuckle her sword-belt. It was a man's belt, pierced far up to encircle her slender waist. Then, with a humble simplicity of manner, she stood looking at him. He understood and moved nearer. Stepping forward, she buckled the belt round; saying slowly, "It is—that is, it *was*—my father's sword."

He half drew the sword—there was no fraud there. He turned on

her perplexed eyes. From her corsage she drew a slender stiletto and pressed it into his hands. "These are all the arms I have, Herrick. I can't give you any more."

"How did you get in?" he demanded curtly.

She pointed to the still open panel. Wheeling, he regarded it with amazement; then he said shortly:

"There's a guard at the door. May n't he hear us?"

"He's asleep—safe for hours. I drugged him." She laughed drearily as she added, "With the same kind of medicine he gave me for your coffee. I tempered the bitterness, and he's swallowed enough to keep him asleep twenty-four hours."

"That passage you came in by—where does it lead?"

"Into the open air. Part of it passes underground. It will carry you among the trees. There my mare Mariana is waiting for you."

He made a couple of strides toward her; his face was hard set; his eyes narrowed.

"Is this another trick? Am I to be set on in the dark? If I am, I'll sell my life pretty high."

"It is no trick. You are on the road to freedom, Herrick."

"Then I'd best be going." His voice was harsh and rough. He took a step toward the open panel.

"Yes, go at once! God keep you!"

His hand was on the panel now; but he turned and stood still. Her face was hidden in her hands. He came slowly back and stood beside her. In her despair and misery, she seemed to represent much of what he himself had felt.

He spoke again; as roughly as before.

"You said these are all your arms—these you've given me. How can you protect yourself when Mendoza finds what you have done?"

"I don't need protection."

"Why not?" And then he added brutally, "Because you are, or will be, his mistress?"

At this, life and pride came back to her.

"Herrick, I've been very wicked; but even I don't deserve such a word from you."

"Then what do you mean by saying you need no protection from such a vile, unprincipled man?"

"I mean that I'm ready to die for what I have done. In freeing you, I have broken military law. I shall be considered a traitor. I shall die; but I do not care. What have I to live for?"

Stanford thrust the revolver into a hip-pocket and, with folded arms, stood regarding her.

"Am I to understand that you've really suffered remorse over making such an incalculable ass of me?"

"Please go, Mr. Stanford."

"I can't leave you here, if you're really in danger of death. You must come with me."

A flash of hope sprang into her eyes.

"Then you don't hate me?"

"Hate you? I detest the sight of you!"

"Then go."

"I can't—without you."

"Why?"

"You are a woman."

"I've done wrong. Being a woman can't save me. I must take my punishment, whether it's imprisonment or death. And you must go. But oh, Herrick, if you could stoop to giving me five little minutes to explain—what I did—if you would just listen that long, Herrick, I could die with a measure of my self-respect restored!"

Stanford shrugged his shoulders; a gesture he had picked up, unconsciously, from his Latin associates.

"Explanations between us are a waste of time. You did a nasty thing, and you are willing to undo it—so far as you can. That's to your credit, and that's all that can be said. Still, the time you ask is yours. I'll listen, if you honestly want me to—for the sake of the arms you've given me. But I tell you it's quite useless."

"I'll be very brief," she said humbly. For a moment she stood silent, her mind a whirl of past incidents; then simply but forcefully, clearly, she took up her story, beginning with the message of the sword.

XXII.

As Catherine de Zarate told her story, the American, standing with folded arms, listened at first indifferently, then with the keenest attention. Before she was half through, the stern impassivity of his face was gone.

When she had brought her story to his final capture, he said curtly, "Have you the first letter—the one Mendoza brought you?"

Mutely she put it into his hands. He read the burning phrases against himself, the powerful appeal to the girl's filial devotion, the final command to avenge Zarate under Mendoza's guidance.

"And you say that miserable dog, Mendoza, forged all this?" he ground out.

"All that, Herrick."

"I never met any man under flag of truce in my life! I never arranged for an exchange of prisoners at any time. And as to my taking a dastard's advantage of an enemy—why, hell itself could n't cook up a more horrible lie!"

"Ah, but how true he made it seem!"

He could barely restrain an impulse to tear the sheet to shreds.

"I dare say it seemed true. It's a fine piece of work. Extremely clever—extremely. If I live to escape, I'll come back here with Madero's men and make Mendoza eat every scrap of this paper on his knees. The—the—" He choked off the raging words at his lips.

"Herrick, here is my father's true letter. Read it! I can't—my tears blot it out. See, there's his secret mark on it—a—" She turned away, covering her face with her hands.

Herrick Stanford ran swiftly through Zarate's real dictation.

"This is the letter of a man," he said slowly.

Catherine de Zarate made no reply. She was crouched again in the great Morris chair. The relief which her explanation had at first given her was drowned now in the desolate knowledge that he was none the less about to pass out of her existence.

"Catherine—" began Stanford. She interrupted him.

"Does n't it seem to you there was some—some little excuse for me?"

"Catherine, a little while ago you were actually about to let me leave you, without one word of explanation on your part! Was that just or kind—to either of us?"

"I had n't either courage or hope. If you had n't turned back to me from the panel, of your own accord, I could never have justified myself to you—never!"

"Did you value my respect so little?"

"What right had I to consider myself? Oh, when I think of all you have borne, Herrick, I find a savage pleasure in hurting myself! I can even punish myself by telling you that you need n't mind having loved me once, Herrick; for only the fact that you were, in my belief, my father's murderer kept me from loving you! And when Major de Ulloa gave me the real letter—oh, then I can't tell you what relief I felt, nor how strangely glad I was. And yesterday, at their cruelty to you, my love for you sprang fully into birth. I can say it now; it is just you should have your full revenge—your full right to hate me."

"Catherine, my darling—hate you!" He was at her side. His arms almost crushed her in their passionate embrace. "Kiss me, my girl! God, how sweet to have faith in you again! You're worth all I've been through—and a hundred times more! See, Catherine, if that scoundrel had n't set his trap for us both, we'd never have met—do you realize that?"

She lifted her head, drinking in, half incredulously, his words. Then her eyes met his. In their mutual glances they made, as only lovers can, a thousand ardent confessions in one.

But a thin, whining sound penetrating the keyhole roused them.

It was the fretful complaint of the little, hairless dog, who had been uneasy for some time about his master. It was the little dog's way to lick Iriarte's face once or twice in the night, and Iriarte's habit to answer with a half-conscious caress. To the hairless dog, Iriarte was a demigod.

The sound alarmed both Stanford and the girl. He drew her toward the panel, but she resisted.

"I must have five minutes more, Herrick. There's a desperately wounded man upstairs. His heart is very weak. Iriarte told me that this man's life depended on the valerian he is giving him, and as Iriarte had to watch here, I promised him to give Lieutenant Gorgoza the valerian regularly, never dreaming I should be forgiven by you, should go with you."

"Iriarte—the infamous vulture—the——"

"But the lieutenant! I need only five minutes. Wounded and helpless as he is, you'd not have me desert him?"

"God forbid!" Stanford gently released her. "Go at once! I'll wait for you here. You can appoint one of the men to watch your patient from now on, can't you?"

"Yes, I'll get Pereira, my own old servant, from the servants' wing. And I'll be back with you, oh, almost at once! I've taken Iriarte's keys. I'll cross over him."

"Don't let me see him, or I'll kill the devil in his drugged sleep!"

Catherine applied the well oiled key and vanished, closing the door and softly locking it after her. She stepped lightly over Iriarte, who, as he slept in the rays of a lantern, was an ugly sight, snoring stertorously with cavernous mouth a-drop. Catherine shivered as she stepped over him; she quite failed to remark that the little, hairless dog was gone.

XXIII.

WHEN Mendoza slept at last, dreaming of Catherine in all the soft confusion of her yielding loveliness, he was perhaps happier than he had ever been, or ever would be, in real life. For those visionary joys carried a certain drifting leisure with them; an indefinable lingering, which in actual existence was by no means characteristic of the man; because in his waking hours it was his way to pursue all desires tempestuously; to seize vehemently on goals attained; to attempt enjoyment by such ardency that he defeated his own happiness; hence his prizes, political or otherwise, afforded him only a short and savage rapture—to be flung aside for some new and apparently more promising end.

Then a sudden sense of foreboding invaded his dreams—the priest at the altar began to intone something strangely nasal, something utterly and disconcertingly foreign to marriage joys. Presently the nasal chant of the churchly dignitary deteriorated into a detestable whine. He

woke—to find the little, rusty-black, beady-eyed, hairless Mexican dog standing on the bed beside him, crying anxiously. The ugly little creature, full of mysterious man-protecting instincts (the loyal glory of the whole dog race) had come to find help for his master—the master he himself could not rouse; the master whom he had nosed and licked frantically, but in vain. Knowing Mendoza best, after Iriarte, he had trotted straight to the Mexican General's room. Owing to Mendoza's own desire for privacy, there was no sentinel at his door; it was his way, when it happened to please him, so to order matters for a time, to live in serene defiance of all military caution. As the door had been carelessly left ajar by the love-absorbed General, the tiny *pelon* found easy access.

Mendoza immediately sat up, and stared uneasily at the small creature. Then his soldierly training brought him to the swift conclusion that something was wrong with Iriarte, or the dog would not have left him.

Clad only in his silk pajamas, Mendoza rose instantly, slipped on his boots, snatched his sword and his revolver, and made for the door. On the threshold he paused a moment, to touch a dry battery button which communicated with the guard in the servants' wing. It rang wildly at the other end, and nearly made a sentinel, who was leaning almost against the bell, jump out of his skin. The man raised his voice in immediate clamor:

"To the General! The alarm! The enemy! Our General!"

Nearly a dozen men, rudely awakened, snatched their arms and ran toward Mendoza's room, their lanterns swinging wildly.

Mendoza, meanwhile, a lantern in his left hand, ran for his prisoner's chamber door; only to find the helpless expert snoring, and his keys gone. Mendoza raged vainly at the locked door; then, whirling, he kicked Iriarte savagely in the ribs, breaking several of them. Shocked into temporary movement, the drugged man moaned and sat up, horribly fuddled.

"The key!" Mendoza stormed. "The key, or I'll pistol you!"

Iriarte had no key to give, and was past any account of himself; yet he was too valuable to shoot. Mendoza hesitated a second; then, a thousand infuriating suspicions in his brain, he ran toward Catherine de Zarate's room. To reach it, he had to pass that of the wounded officer, and as he came into this part of the corridor, he ran directly into Catherine, as she was leaving the sick man's chamber.

Brave as she was, the shock of this unexpected meeting, the fronting of Mendoza's face tense with rage, unnerved her. She screamed aloud, and, dropping the little brass hand-lamp she carried, fell back against the wall; her fingers groping along it as if for support.

The lamp went out instantly; but Mendoza flashed his lantern

squarely in her face. The fright he saw there completed his belief that he had been outwitted.

"The key, you Jezebel!" he rasped, half choking. "The key to the green den!" As he spoke, his raging eyes caught the glimmer of brass in her sash. Seizing it, he tore the folds from her waist and snatched from them the bunch of keys hitherto carried by the luckless specialist.

An oath foamed from his lips, just as the sergeant and his men, who had found the General's room empty, came tearing along the corridor, thinking he might be with the wounded officer. Mendoza recovered himself and held out the keys to the gaping sergeant.

"Zuñiga, quick—to the green den! I'm afraid this woman has let *El Diablo* out. She's drugged Iriarte, and got his keys. But the American may be still waiting there for her, and armed. If he is, take him alive—I'm not done with him. Let me know at once if he's still secured."

The sergeant flashed one amazed, reproachful look at Catherine de Zarate, and was gone on a run, his men after him.

As he and his force vanished, Mendoza turned on Catherine:

"Finding you about, with those keys, can mean only one thing. You *did* fall in love with that American assassin, that lean-faced commoner; you that we thought a kind of military saint! You could n't even flirt with an alien, a devil, a natural enemy, without wanting him! *Per Dios*—a saint! An ordinary camp-follower would have had more decency! *This* was the secret of your pretty ways to me last night; and I—fool, imbecile, that I was—I swallowed it all—and asked you to marry me to-morrow! To-morrow—there shall be a to-morrow for you, Catherine de Zarate, if that wretch is gone out of my hands! Why don't you speak? Why don't you speak, I say?"

She made no reply. In her terror and confusion, only one thing was clear: she must let him storm on at her until she knew whether the American was gone. Further power for diplomacy she had none; indeed, she had no longer any opportunity.

Staring at her mute lips, Mendoza found his worst suspicions confirmed. He never doubted now for a second that *El Diablo* was gone. When he recalled, with stinging clearness, how plastic he himself had been to the mood Catherine chose to call up in him, he felt that no man had ever before been so humiliated, or his confidence, his love, so misused.

"A good thing Captain de Zarate is dead," he foamed on. "That his daughter, Catherine de Zarate, should rise in the night to liberate a lover! What, with all Mexico full of decent men, must you have so little respect for yourself as to choose where a Parisian *cocotte* would have turned away in disgust? And if he's gone, as I've no doubt he has, you shall find out what this despicable action will cost you! And if he's

still there, I'll find a way to make him suffer more than he has ever suffered yet. Why don't you say something in your own defense, Señorita de Zarate? Are you so execrably guilty that even a woman's voluminous lies are dried up in you?"

Still unreplying, she waited. Would the suspense never end?

Then her eyes caught the returning gleam of the sergeant's lantern; he came up, panting, his faithful "tail," as a Highlander might have called them, indefatigable, close in his rear.

Saluting, he gasped:

"*El Diablo* is gone, my General! There lie only his discarded fetters. There is no sign to show how he escaped. Unless——" The sergeant glanced at Catherine.

A rash, incautious joy irradiated her mobile face. Mendoza saw it, and was nearly beside himself.

"Where is *El Diablo*? As your commanding officer, I warn you to answer me! Where is he?"

"Señor Stanford is miles away, on my mare. He escaped long ago. Any search for him will be time lost. You deceived me into deceiving him, General Mendoza. I merely set right a wretched wrong you made me commit."

Mendoza started. For a moment an angry question quivered on his tongue. It was checked by the realization that before the greedily listening soldiers this was no time to ask how she unearthed a secret he had believed safely buried. The details of his own forgery would not make a pleasant rehearsal.

"This woman is under arrest; she confesses herself a traitor, Sergeant," said Mendoza grimly. "Tie her wrists behind her with her sash. There it lies on the floor."

The sergeant hesitated, then obeyed, the girl submitting in a proud silence.

Mendoza continued: "As my own room has barred windows, I will lock her in there, and take another. In spite of what she says, her lover, *El Diablo*, may be around here yet. Join your men; don't give up the search for the next hour—the house is so large. Find him and I will fill your pockets with silver."

After another reproachful glance at the army's former feminine idol, the sergeant hurried away to his task; although Mendoza felt perfectly certain it was a useless one, and had merely wanted to get rid of his man. Enraged as he was by the loss of his famous prisoner, the Spanish General's heart leaped savagely to the thought that there was immediate revenge, immediate compensation, in his grasp.

He pointed the way to Catherine de Zarate, and she walked forward fearlessly, in her usual courageous self-poise; certain that if any harm came to Herrick Stanford, or if he failed in her rescue, death was the

worst thing which could befall her. She was again the militant, exalted young girl-soldier, not a little proud of her own defiant attitude.

She condemned Mendoza no further than to believe him a liar and forger. If she remembered his love at all, she would merely have said that he loved her no longer; that he hated her now as she hated him. Concerning that false shadow of Love that takes Love's name in vain, and is all the wilder for being mixed with hate, she never thought at all.

XXIV.

MENDOZA set the lantern he carried on the table, and then motioned his captive abruptly to a chair, taking one himself.

Catherine hesitated. Accustomed as she was to the most ceremonious respect, not only from every soldier but from Mendoza himself, his undress offended her. She shook off the feeling as trivial in the face of such matters of life and death, sat down, and waited to hear what he might wish to say, lifting again to him that clear, compelling look which had so often disconcerted and abashed Mendoza's grosser nature.

"You have something to say to me, General, before you leave the room you have assigned me?"

"*Per Dios*—assurance stays with you, Catherine de Zarate! But yes! I have much to say! How did you get your vile American lover past my sentries?"

"I think it's I who should be asking questions, General Mendoza. How did you learn to forge so aptly? My father's name! And to such a letter! How did you learn such work, General Mendoza?"

His eyes blazed.

"You are clever. You turn your attacks very neatly! You, the wanton mistress of an outlaw—that's the United States blood in you, my piece of immaculateness!"

She started to her feet.

"How dare you!"

He laughed; a short, ugly, dangerous, lawless sound. "You don't like truths, it seems! Sit down!"

"I won't sit where you are until you apologize, General Mendoza."

"If you are n't already his mistress, you would soon have been in his arms, if I had n't encountered you."

"I was to be his wife," said Catherine steadily. Then she added defiantly, "Perhaps I still shall be."

"His wife! His wife! *Grace à Dios*, what are women made of? You wanted to be his wife when you might have been mine!" He rose. "Well, you *shall* be his wife—I'll pack you back to him."

"You will let me go! General, do that and I will forgive you all you have done—all!"

"You'll forgive me! *Valgamdios!* The insolence of red and white cheeks! Of fine eyes and hair! You're infernally lovely to-night. Forgive me! Forgive all you please, Catherine. I'll send you back to him—when I'm tired of you; not sooner, Catherine de Zarate."

His mask fell with his last words, and Catherine saw in his eyes what she would not see; heard in his tones what she could not believe.

"Does that mean," she gasped, "that you—mean—to kill me?"

"Absurd! Women of curves like yours don't die—unless they are killed by jealous lovers." He came toward her. "I said—when I am tired of you, Catherine. You might have been my wife; now you shall be, to-night, what I please. If I've lost my prisoner, I have kept you. He may have the fancies of your mind with him, but I—I have—you!"

She searched his face wildly; she wrenched impotently at her lashed wrists; her lips parted; her heart, for sheer terror, seemed to stop; her fine courage, the fruit of her fancied security, died to ashes. She tried to speak and found no words. Mendoza stood gazing in malignant pleasure at her despairing horror. Where now was the former challenge in her lovely eyes? Her terror spurred him on; he came nearer.

XXV.

THE Spaniard reached his prisoner's side; but he had scarcely done so when the sudden sharp, wickedly incisive barking of an automatic in a fusillade of pistol-shots rang abruptly through the floor below.

Mendoza, checked instantly, listened keenly, and whirled round, drawing his sword, just as the door was flung open, and Herrick Stanford, with the dead De Zarate's blade in his right hand, dashed in. His emptied automatic smoked on the stairway of the floor below; but the work it had done was evidenced down there by dying or wounded men.

Few of the nine shots had failed in effect, and of the dozen troopers in the sergeant's command only five were fit for service. These five and their leader were badly demoralized; for Stanford had vanished up a little known side stair, in the smoke from the revolvers, after apparently turning to the right. The baffled pursuit raged off in the wrong direction. They kept to the second floor while Stanford, taking to the third for safety, and unwarned by any light under Mendoza's flawlessly joined door, had rushed into his enemy's very stronghold. Barely escaping Mendoza's ready attack, he answered with counter-thrusts so fierce that the Mexican realized he should have to fight hard for his life. Thrust and parry succeeded thrust and parry, until both men found time to regret the absence of that swifter weapon, the revolver.

Mendoza's pistol was lying on the table, where he had laid it on his

entrance. He bitterly regretted that, in the few seconds vouchsafed him, he had drawn his sword instead of snatching up his pistol. But it had happened that his elbow had knocked a map over the revolver, and, in the flush of danger, instinct had flown to the weapon at his side.

At last a red splotch sprang to Mendoza's silk-covered shoulder. He was sharply but not dangerously cut. The scarlet gave Catherine new courage. The pain filled Mendoza with a fury that materially lessened his swordsmanship. In the next second, through a savage thrust taught him by Janviers of Paris, Stanford sent Mendoza's Toledo steel flying across the room. Dazed, weaponless, and shaken, Mendoza found himself facing the instant death that he read in the American's relentless eyes. The Spaniard did not find the foretaste sweet, but he snatched at his courage and met bravely the final thrust as it leaped unerringly at him.

Meanwhile the sergeant below had raged through one floor. Then, by some instinct of the chase, he turned up instead of down, reached the third floor, and saw through the open door, by the light of the clear lantern, his commander's sword fly toward the opposite wall.

The sergeant lacked neither wit nor quickness. Mendoza's chances were measured by seconds now; but it took only a second for the sergeant to leap across the room and drag down the sword-arm of Herrick Stanford, just as the latter's blade was actually pricking the Spaniard's flesh.

The five men at the sergeant's heels hurled themselves on the American. Stanford went down under a mass of struggling men. Mendoza, gasping with fatigue, leaned one hand on a chair-back and uttered an oath and a vow to his patron saint in one sentence. Then, recovering his wits, he rushed for his revolver, intending to pistol the American, Diaz or no Diaz, should Stanford rise free. But it is only in Dumas's novels that a man shakes off six others piled on top of him, and a sword once encumbered is no weapon at all. When Herrick Stanford did rise at last, his arms had been securely bound behind him by a rope halter which a trooper happened to have tied across his shoulder.

Outside the thick-walled old house, the sound of shots had not penetrated far enough to give the alarm. The whole action was buried in those eighteen-inch walls; muffled in concrete, stifled in stone; a sinister fact which pleased Mendoza. There had been soldiers enough for his needs.

He dismissed, with lavish praise, the sergeant and his men, to look after the dead and wounded, and to find a surgeon; reserving, however, two men as guards for his prisoners. This done, he ordered his captives to the green den; never doubting its security now that he had its key. He naturally believed that Catherine had let Stanford out into the corri-

dor over Iriarte's insensate body. At Mendoza's command, a carefully concealed thrill of hope ran through his prisoners. If only they should be left alone there together, the panel waited; a sure path to freedom.

XXVI.

THEY could scarcely believe in so fortunate an opportunity, but they very shortly found themselves in the quiet study of the vanished scholar.

Now that they were in the room, Mendoza turned to his men.

"I have political exigencies to discuss with these prisoners. Wait outside in the second corridor. If I need you, I will touch this dry battery button. And take that befuddled dog, Iriarte, along with you."

The soldiers withdrew, and Mendoza turned, with a smile of quiet enjoyment, to his captives.

"Well, my friends," he said ironically. "God watches over his own! Here am I safe and sound, and fortunate as ever in my prisoners: one the outlaw most wanted by our admirable president; the other the most beautiful girl in Mexico."

At Mendoza's reference to Catherine, the American glanced sharply at the Spaniard. But Stanford knew that Catherine was the daughter of the dead Zarate, who had been a loyal and gallant officer under Mendoza. Further, Zarate was known to have been Mendoza's personal friend. Catherine, then, could hardly fail to be personally safe, however great Mendoza's fury over her share in the liberation of Stanford. That Catherine had admitted her freeing of Stanford was evidenced by her fettered wrists. The American found himself torn between a desire to try to exonerate her, and the feeling that it might be wiser to leave matters as they were, in the hope that they would be left captives together, and so make a mutual escape through the panel.

Caressing his mustaches, Mendoza continued:

"Nothing from either of you? Señor Herrick Stanford, can't you tell us by what measure of brilliancy you came plunging back into my quarters after you had once safely escaped? Had the Señorita de Zarate such attraction that you must lose *all* your discretion? You evidently love with a vengeance! Is a mistress so hard to replace?"

His tone pointed the word in its most offensive sense; but Stanford answered quietly:

"You have all the advantage on your side, General Mendoza, and you can afford to be too courteous to insult a girl whom you know perfectly well to be as pure as your own mother."

Mendoza folded his arms and gazed keenly at the American. "Be frank with me, Señor. Am I to understand that the Señorita de Zarate had, all along, no better bait for you than promises as yet unfulfilled?"

Stanford winced; then he said coolly: "There was, and is, no question of bait. I asked nothing better than the hope of marrying her, and that hope still possesses me."

"It apparently possessed her also, or she would not have freed an alien to the destruction of her own reputation, military and personal. I am interested in so pretty an idyl; very much interested—to such an extent indeed, Señor Stanford, that when I am tired, quite tired, of the lady, I will, if you are still in the land of the living (a rather improbable thing)—I will certainly send her back to you, wherever you may be."

"What do you mean?" rasped Stanford.

The rage in Mendoza suddenly passed its flood-gates. "I mean this: do you think that you can escape me, fight me, insult me, nearly kill me, and claim with impunity the woman I've always loved? Not only do you go back into Iriarte's keeping, Señor Herrick Stanford; but you go with the knowledge that to-night this girl is mine—*mine*—do you understand?"

"You dare n't even think of such a thing!" Stanford interrupted fiercely, tumultuously. "You, an officer and a gentleman! She, the daughter of your dead ally and friend! Black as you may be, you dare not touch her. You would blast your own reputation."

"Who will carry any story against me?" Mendoza returned slowly. "Do you really think, Señor Stanford, that in these distracted and bloody times there is any one to watch over or care about the reputation of a girl voluntarily a camp-follower? Whatever incidents occur to-night are safe in these old walls." As he spoke, Mendoza moved nearer to Catherine de Zarate. "You and I, *ma belle militaire*, will leave this gentleman to his own thoughts. We have softer cares ahead, Catherine. Will you go quietly? Appeals to my men will do you no good, Catherine. I am only taking you to my room as a prisoner, you see! And if Eros comes into his own——"

Terrified again into immobility; only too well aware how little help she could expect from the two sentinels in the corridors (the precious pair being, to her knowledge, two of the worst of the soldiery), Catherine de Zarate could only fasten on Stanford the frantic appeal of her dilated eyes. Her lips moved; but no sound issued from their stiffened beauty. Their undelivered cry drove Stanford more nearly frantic than if she had shrieked to him for the aid she was silently imploring. He sprang between her and the Mexican. His voice, broken with agony and despair, rang through the room:

"Leave her here with me—leave her with me! You have the power of life and death over both of us—is n't that enough? Is n't——"

The Mexican laid his hand on his pistol. Then, remembering in time the value of his prisoner, and Iriarte's promise of eventual success, he lunged forward, caught the American by the throat, and pitched him

backward over a low footstool. When Herrick Stanford rose, Catherine was in the Spaniard's arms.

"Herrick! Herrick! Herrick!"

In the most exquisite physical torment, Herrick Stanford had not prayed. He had trusted to his own will-power to enable him to endure the worst. And in all those past hours of anguish, except for one faint groan, his will had proved enough. But now, his heart nearly breaking, his desperate manhood nearly crazed, he found, in the abyss of the deepest suffering he had yet endured, how slight, how despicable, in the hour of extremity, seems human power, and he did pray, a very short prayer:

"God, give me strength—for her sake!"

It may be his prayer was answered; or possibly the halter rein lashing his wrists behind him was the worse for wind and weather; certainly the rope, strained against his writhing muscles, snapped like a rotten cord.

Mendoza, flushed with triumph, the wine of the whole situation running madly to his head, had made the grave error of despising the enemy he had sent hard to the floor. The Spaniard lost himself in his sense of indisputable power, while his back was, for the second, to the man he believed safely roped. In that second the American was on him, his long fingers closing like a circle of steel around the Mexican's throat—just before Mendoza's next intake of breath.

Over the shoulder against which the Mexican was crushing her, Catherine had seen the breaking of her lover's bonds. The magic of that vision gave her not only hope but sudden wit. As Stanford's fingers reached Mendoza's throat, and the Mexican's hands involuntarily flew upward to loosen them, Catherine dropped her head to Mendoza's waist, her white teeth, flawless and strong, closed on his revolver's butt, and when the Spaniard went to the floor with Herrick Stanford on top, there was no pistol to meet the frantic right hand of Mendoza as he lost precious seconds in fumbling for it.

When Herrick Stanford rose, never again would Mendoza torture man or insult woman.

There was no time for words. Scarcely daring to believe in their own good fortune, Stanford snatched the sword and belt from the inanimate form, took the revolver from Catherine, tore the sash from her hands, and flung open the panel. Still half incredulous, he closed the panel behind them, and fled with her underground into the open woods where the patient mare waited.

Double loaded as she was, Mariana galloped as though she carried only one. When the day broke, a man who had been given up for dead rode, haggard-faced but shining-eyed, into Madero's camp, and lifted from his crupper the girl whom Mendoza had justly called the most beautiful in Mexico.

A DISCOURSE ON MODERN SIBYLS

By Lady Ritchie
(Mrs. Anne Thackeray Ritchie)

EVERYTHING is to be found in book-lore; not only is the generous feast spread out for favored guests, but the crumbs are there falling from the high tables. There is fun, there is fancy and good-humor, there is companionship for the solitary, comfort for the sad, knowledge of life for the young, and for the elders pleasant gossip and remembrance. Professor Ker has brought Romance before us; Professor Bradley has spoken of Poetry and its uses—who that was present on that last occasion when he spoke will not remember? The foggy gloom of the streets invaded the crowded, attentive room, but it was of light, and lovely things, the lecturer discoursed. The wide suggestions appealed to those who could follow them, as well as to those among us who could not always follow with full comprehension, but who appreciated and breathed for the moment with some deeper breath, "living," as Professor Bradley said, "a section of each poet's own life" in the passing realization of his thought. It may seem presumptuous indeed for a "wren with little quill" to follow such discourses with mere personalities, small in comparison to those larger philosophies, yet a literary association is intended to emphasize and give voice to the various units which compose the whole, as letters are part of a word, words form the sentence, and finally the book of life itself is spread open.

There is no doubt but that different chapters of Literature commend themselves to different generations. A well-known critic, an American lady, Miss Repplier, also taking a personal standpoint, deplors the misfortune of having been herself born quite a century too late for Success! She appeals to "Evelina," that work admired by Johnson and Burke; she points to Hannah More, whose tragedies drew tears from and were praised by Garrick, whose tracts reached Moscow and made their edifying way to Iceland itself—tracts such as "Charles the Footman" and the "Shepherd of Salisbury Plain," which are also said to have been found by a missionary in the library of the Rajah of Tanjore. "Those were the days to live in," cries Miss Repplier, "when families

tore the 'Mysteries of Udolpho' to pieces in their eager interest, when the astounding Miss Seward dazzled the literary world; and unfortunately, born a hundred years too late, may look back with wistful eyes upon an age which they feel themselves qualified to have adorned!"

Some time ago, borrowing a title from a well-known Elizabethan collection of histories, I wrote a little volume called "A Book of Sibyls." It did not concern classical beings, with flying robes and tripods, uttering incoherent rhymes and oracles at Delphi and elsewhere, but it related to certain women leading notable lives in mob-caps and hobble-skirts. Jane Austen, then as now, was supreme among them, although some sapient critics of her own time considered her "commonplace," and not to compare to the Edgeworths, Barbaulds, and Opies of the day.

When it was first suggested that I should write of yet another generation of Sibyls nearer to my own experience, I could but feel that, unlike Miss Repplier, I had been fortunate indeed in the time of my birth. I do not know whether others will agree with a friend of mine who declares that people reach their complement from ten to twelve years old, and that they never really change after that time, though they may learn more and more facts. As the years go by, and, alas, the hour for *forgetting* may begin, the same observer still exists throughout the different stages. Mrs. Gaskell and Mrs. Oliphant were my torch-bearers in youth as afterwards. The Brontës were magicians, flashing romance into the little Kensington street in which we dwelt. George Eliot followed. I do not here attempt to speak of all the great masters of the craft then living, but of certain women with whom I have had the privilege of being in some relation. These ladies were dressed not in flying draperies, nor in mob-caps and hobble-skirts, but in crinolines—though it seems almost desecration to mention the fact, or to suggest that George Eliot ever wore one. They put on loped bonnets when they went abroad; their parasols were the size of half-crowns; they had sandalled shoes, or odd, flat, elastic brodequins. Whatever their dress may have been in 1850, they were true Sibyls nevertheless. Their voices were direct and outspoken, they went straight to the heart of things. When I made their acquaintance, I myself was about twelve years old and forbidden by my governess to read novels. No objection was made to the works of Miss Yonge, personally unknown to me indeed, but nevertheless a sympathetic confidante and playfellow. I was older before Miss Braddon wove the spells which my father and Dickens both so warmly praised. My father liked "Lady Audley's Secret"; Dickens specially cared for the story of "The Doctor's Wife." Many other Sibyls were yet to be, but in those early days they concerned me not. Rhoda Broughton was in her schoolroom, Emily Lawless was in her nursery, Mrs. Humphry Ward in her cradle. Mary Cholmondeley

and Margaret Woods were not even born; not to speak of how many others besides, happily yet to be, poets, historians, essayists, whose names will come to all our minds.

My governess herself gave me Mrs. Oliphant's first book as an exception to the rigid rule against novel-reading, saying she heard it had been written by a girl only a few years older than I was. It was in Scotch which I could not understand, but it was a novel all the same. As to the stern edict of limitation, fortunately for me *Blackwood* was not a novel, but a sober-looking magazine with a brown-paper cover and a picture of George Buchanan, surrounded by thistles; and there it was that a few years later I found the "Scenes from Clerical Life," all-absorbing, convincing, written as I imagined by one of the wisest of men. I used to try to picture him to myself, grave and noble, with a melancholy reserved manner, rather bald—certainly a clergyman from Cambridge. It was like going to his church to read of *Amos* and *Milly Barton* and the people out of "Janet's Repentance" and "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story," who seemed to fill our house where such good company was already to be found.

There are certain overtures, like that one to the "Freischütz," which in the opening bars bring before us all the coming wonder of the great music yet to be. In the same way, it seems now, looking back, that when I wondered over the first opening chapters of George Eliot's work, all the suggestion of its future came flooding in. I cannot think that she has ever given us anything more beautiful than the "Scenes from Clerical Life," as they dawned then, complete, full of heart and of knowledge—knowledge of that special phase of life which was in her own experience.

The very first sentences of "Amos Barton" open in old Shepperton Church, where George Eliot, as a child herself, is waiting in her place:

"As the moment of psalmody approached, by some process to me as mysterious and untraceable as the opening of the flowers or the breaking-out of the stars, a slate appeared in front of the gallery, advertising in bold characters the psalm about to be sung." Then follows the description of its accompaniment, "the bassoon, the two key-bugles, the carpenter understood to have an amazing power of singing 'counter' who formed the complement of a choir regarded in Shepperton as one of distinguished attraction, occasionally known to draw hearers from the next parish. . . . The greater triumphs were reserved for the Sundays when the slate announced an *Anthem* . . . when the key-bugles always ran away at a great pace, while the bassoon every now and then boomed a flying shot after them. . . ."

Better even than the account of the choir is the noble sermon the author speaks in conclusion, and of which this is the text:

"Blessed influence of one true loving human soul on another! Not calculable by algebra, not deducible by logic, but mysterious, effectual, mighty as the hidden process by which the tiny seed is quickened, and bursts forth into tall stem and broad leaf, and glowing tasseled flower. Ideas are often poor ghosts; our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them; they pass athwart us in thin vapor, and cannot make themselves felt. *But sometimes they are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft responsive hands, they look at us with sad sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith and its love. Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame.*"

Some one asked me once if I liked books or people best. It is an impossible question to answer. Books *are* people, if they are worth anything at all; just as people at times become books, and are often all the better for the transmigration.

I once had a talk with George Eliot. It was in winter time with the snow lying on the ground. She sat by the fire in a beautiful black satin gown, with a green-shaded lamp on the table beside her, where I saw German books lying and pamphlets and ivory paper-cutters. She was very quiet and noble, with two steady little eyes and a sweet voice. As I looked, I felt her to be a friend, not exactly a personal friend, but a good and benevolent impulse. I remember she said "it was better in life to build one's cottage in a valley so as to face the worst and not to fall away; and the worst," she continued, "was this very often, that people were living with a hidden power of work and of help in them which they scarcely estimated. We ought to respect our influence," she said. "We know by our own experience how very much others affect our lives, and we must remember that we in turn must have the same effect upon others."

I cannot but recall at the same time what another friend once told me of George Eliot's vivid suffering and susceptibility to outer influences, to criticism. People of an imaginative nature buy their experience dearly, and perhaps over-estimate the importance of the opinions which disturb them. Miss Brontë suffered much in the same way, and I have known similar instances even among literary men. At the time when I knew George Eliot her name was famous, "Middlemarch" and "Daniel Deronda" had issued like fertilizing tides, lagging sometimes, then again carrying everything along with them. She had written that noble opening chapter to "Romola," that "Proem," as she chooses to call it, in which she stands upon the Ponte Vecchio looking over Florence and evoking its past and its present, and describing with so sure a touch "the little children in the old city making another sunlight amid the shadows of age."

I have sometimes tried to define to myself the differences between the great women-writers of my youth. George Eliot and Mrs. Oliphant seem to be Rulers in their different kingdoms of fancy; George Eliot watching her characters from afar, Mrs. Oliphant in a like way describing, but never seeming subject to, the thronging companies she evokes. Mrs. Gaskell, on the contrary, became the people she wrote about. When she wrote of Charlotte Brontë, for instance, she saw with her eyes and imbibed her impressions. In the same way in her stories she seems inspired by each character in turn, whether it is *Molly Gibson* or her step-mother, or *Miss Matty* and *Miss Deborah*, or shall we instance *Philip Hepburn* in "*Sylvia's Lovers*," walking along the downs in the darkness, looking towards the lights in the distant valley and listening to the clang of the New Year bells?

Currer Bell wrote some years before George Eliot began to publish. There is an amusing and indignant letter addressed to George Lewes in 1850, when Currer Bell, in correspondence with him, complains of a review (in the *Edinburgh*) he had written of her work. Some one once asked Miss Yonge what she felt when the reviewers cut her up. She laughed, and said: "Well, I don't cry all day long, as Miss Brontë does when she reads an adverse review." But Miss Brontë's standard is quite different from Miss Yonge's.* For her everybody struck a note, and was to be reckoned with. She concludes her letter to Lewes in these words:

I shake hands with you, you have excellent points, you can be generous. I still feel angry and think I do well to be angry, but it is the anger one experiences for rough play rather than foul play. I am yours with a certain respect and more chagrin,

CURRER BELL

Endless histories of the Brontës have been written of late, but the stories of "*Jane Eyre*," of "*Shirley*," of "*Villette*," are each in turn biographies of Charlotte Brontë and of her sisters, told by her with that passion which colored everything she touched. We have no need to be taught to admire her. She was a Sibyl indeed, with oracles at her command. She flashed her inspirations upon her readers, and all through the sadness of her life and its surroundings one realizes the passionate love which pervaded it, both for the people who belonged to her, and the places and things to which she belonged. She was a poet.

* There is a pretty story told in Mrs. Romanes's *Life of Charlotte Yonge*, who was frightened by the popularity of "*The Heir of Redclyffe*," and who went to consult Keble, fearing her own undue elation. "Do you care for such things?" said kind Keble; and then he quoted the concluding words of the 90th Psalm: "Prosper thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper thou our handiwork."

She owned, as only poets can own, the world all round about her. The freehold of the fells and the moors was hers, and of the great Yorkshire vault overhead; and above all that eager heart was hers, throbbing in the little frail body.

"If you knew," she writes to a friend, "my thoughts, the dreams that absorb me, and the fiery imagination that at times eats me up, you would pity and, I dare say, despise me, but I know the treasures of the Bible, I love them and adore them, I can see the well of Life in all its clearness, but when I stoop down to drink, the pure waters fly from my lips as if I were Tantalus."

No more spontaneous honor was ever offered by one woman of genius to another, than when Mrs. Gaskell wrote the life of Charlotte Brontë. The opening of the book is very remarkable; the wild West Riding country is there, the weather is there, the country people are made to talk—how old Tabby lives in the stone Parsonage along with the Parson and his wonderful children! We see those girls growing up as time goes on, growing into tiny gigantic women, so timid, so strong, for whom life was so great a matter, who thought the world was made for them, who faced death with such calm and courageous dignity.

Any one who has ever studied the work of the Brontës must have realized that gift of description which was theirs. I remember once being in Brussels, having lost my way, when I came to a place off the high street which was strangely familiar to me, a place where steps led from the street to a lower level; and there stood a fine old house with closed doors and shutters, and a walled garden, and summer trees overgrowing the walls. Surely this had all been seen before by me, and I had an odd impression of a figure flitting from the doorway; then I suddenly recognized the house in "Villette," where *Lucy Snow* spent that long and lonely summer time. On my return to the hotel I found that I had not been mistaken. Alas! according to an article published not long ago in *Blackwood*, the Pension Héger and its inhabitants also recognized the pictures in "Villette," I can imagine the interest and the dissatisfaction they must have given, most especially to the mistress of the establishment. The writer of the article, an American girl who had herself been at the school, describes all that M. Héger and his wife told her of their admiration and respect for their *pensionnaire*, and their dismay when they discovered the impression they themselves had made upon her. For years afterwards, by Madame's decree, no English pupils were received into the establishment; and what they subsequently thought of the American girl's article I do not know.

As a child I can remember Charlotte Brontë talking to my father with odd inquiring glances; as a girl I heard of her from her friends

and admirers. Only the other day a characteristic story was told me by Mr. Reginald Smith. When his father-in-law, Mr. George Smith, wished to have Miss Brontë's portrait done, he applied to Mr. George Richmond, the great painter, who agreed to make the attempt, but who found it almost impossible to catch the likeness, so utterly dull and unresponsive was her expression. For a long time he tried in vain to interest her and awaken any gleam of life; at last by chance he happened to mention that he had seen the Duke of Wellington the day before. Immediately the mask came to life, the light flashed forth, and all was well.

Some years after her death I visited the shrine to which such hundreds of pilgrims have climbed in turn. We came from Keighley, toiling up the steep hill at some hour when the women were leaving their work at the mills, and the echo of their wooden clogs, striking upon the stones, followed us all the way. We reached Haworth on the hill-top with its scattered cottages and distant wolds and the grim, stately church up-rearing in the churchyard. We stopped at the doorway of the inn, of which we had read and which Branwell Brontë frequented. The days of which I am speaking are so long ago that the host was still alive who had known the Brontës, and he described how Branwell used to linger in the bar late into the night, and finally be sent hurrying home by a back door and a short cross-road that leads to the parsonage. We, too, followed the road, hoping to see the rooms in the little rectory where the great visions had been evoked for all the world to wonder at. The then dwellers at the parsonage, naturally exasperated by an unending stream of uninvited visitors, refused to admit us, and, this being so, we crossed the adjacent churchyard and came to the church, where a pew-opener showed us the old pew and the monuments, and we heard her discoursing, somewhat too familiarly I thought, of those whose dead memories still outshine the living presences. Nay, the very creatures of their imaginations still seemed more alive than many of us. Who shall limit the life of visionary friends, of dream children after the dreamers are gone?

Just as archaeologists trace buried cities, so I have lately heard of an American critic who has, with a personally conducted party of compatriots and Norwegians interested in books and education, followed the traces of Mrs. Gaskell's advance and travelled from America *viâ* Norway to Knutsford in Cheshire to see the actual home of *Miss Mattie* at "Cranford," so as to be able to describe it to the classes at home.

What a kind gift to the world was this "Cranford," that city of refuge! Charlotte Brontë, writing to Mrs. Gaskell in 1853, says of a letter: "It was as pleasant as spring showers, as reviving as a friend's visit, in short, very like a page of 'Cranford.'"

"Cranford" is no heroic school of life, no scene of passion: it is daily bread, it is merry kindness. It proves the value of little things,

it is the grain of mustard seed, it reveals the mighty secret of kindness allied to gentle fun. *Parson Primrose* would have been at home there, so would *Sir Roger de Coverley* and *Colonel Newcome*. There should be a proposal to give the freedom of the city to certain favored heroes and heroines—we might each select them for ourselves.

I have quoted elsewhere the description given to me by Mrs. Murray Smith, when I asked her what she remembered of Mrs. Gaskell. She answered, "Many have written of her, nobody has ever quite expressed her as she was, nor given the *charm* of her presence, the interest of all she said, of her vivid memory and delightful companionship."

As for Charlotte Brontë, most of the later happiness of her life came from Mrs. Gaskell's protecting element of common sense and kindly friendship. "Do we not all know that true greatness is single, oblivious of self and prone to unselfish, unambitious attachments?" wrote the author of "*Cranford*." Her daughter, speaking of her long after, once exclaimed this was in truth her mother—simple, forgetting her own interests in trying to help others.

I have wished in this little address to recall these four well-known Sibyls of my early youth—George Eliot, Mrs. Gaskell, Currer Bell, Mrs. Oliphant. Of all these, Mrs. Oliphant's life is the one most familiar to me, and with my remembrance of her I will conclude. Her presence is still vivid for all who knew her, that white-haired, bright-eyed lady, sitting in her sunny room at Windsor, with her dogs at her feet, with flowers round about, with the happy inroads of her boys and their friends, with girls making the place merry and busy, and a curious bodyguard of older friends, somewhat jealous and intolerant of any affections of later date than their own. It was good to see her among them all, ever serene in attention and interest, the most noteworthy mistress of the house, welcoming courteously, speaking definitely and to the point with her pretty racy Scotch accent and soft tones. Her work was never-ceasing, but it scarcely seemed to interfere with her hospitable life among her associates.

I knew her abroad as well as at home. I was once staying in a hotel at Grindelwald with the Leslie Stephens. Mrs. Oliphant and her young people were there also, and our parties joined company. We used to dine together, walk together; I used to see her at her daily task, steadily continuing, notwithstanding all the interruptions of nature and human nature—the changing lights on the mountains, the exclaiming of youthful excursionists, the many temptations to leave her task. I was always struck, when I saw her writing, by her concentration and the perfect neatness of her arrangements—the tiny inkstand of condensed ink, into which she poured a few drops of water enough for each day's work, the

orderly manuscript, her delicate, fine pen. . . . When she had finished, she would come out in the evening for a saunter along the valley with Leslie Stephen and the rest of us. She was one of those people whose presence is even more than a *pleasure*, hers was a stimulus; she was kindly, sympathetic, and yet answering with that chord of intelligent antagonism which is so suggestive and makes for such good talk.

She used to tell me a great deal of her past life at that time, but with a certain reserve also, and it was not until I read the autobiography published after her death that I realized what her great cares had been. I could then understand why she had been so scornful of mental difficulties which seemed real enough to some of us, and why she always spoke bitterly of problems of thought—she who had so many practical troubles to encounter. The impression of that special time is very vivid still—the busy clatter of the Swiss village close at hand, the great surrounding mountains, the terrace where we used to sit together under the clematis in full flower, and her eyes shining as she talked on and on. I remember her once saying, when I exclaimed at something she told me, “Temperament has a great deal to do with our lives, and mine is a hopeful temper and has carried me on through terrible trials.”

Some time after our visit to Grindelwald, I wrote to her to ask for a literary contribution for a friend, an editor who was ill and in great need of help. Mrs. Oliphant immediately sent a story, a charming, long, cheerful story, which (as I discovered later) had been written by her son's sick-bed, and which she gave as a gift with her bountiful hand at a time when she hardly knew where to turn for money. What friend in trouble was ever dropped or ignored by her? When her helpless brother and his children came appealing to her she took them all into her home. The brother died, and his fine young son also died just at the opening of the career in which Mrs. Oliphant had started him, but the delicate girls survived to repay with full measure all the love they had received.

Mrs. Oliphant wrote near a hundred novels, we are told, besides her admirable criticisms and her histories, besides her reviews, and the lives of Montalembert, of Irving, and of Laurence Oliphant, her kinsman. Her books of travel about Florence and Venice and the Holy Land represent her holidays; as for her mystical histories, they always seem to be more like *herself* than anything else; for though she hated mental speculation, she was a believing mystic in the semblance of a dignified Scotch lady, a little cold in manner and tart in speech. Yet, as is the way with some, she too was strangely moved at times to cast away all concealment, and to pour out in writing those heart-secrets which seem spoken, not to the world, but to the very spirit of sympathy which

is in the world, when the pen runs on almost of its own accord and the human spirit cries aloud from the depths of silence.

I do not remember to have read anywhere else a description more to the point than that written by Mrs. Oliphant, towards the close of her writing, in a book which she calls "The Ways of Life," describing "the ebb-tide"—the sudden realization that all advance is at an end. . . . "It is a very startling discovery," she says, "to one who has perhaps been going with a tolerably full sail, without any consciousness of weakened energies or failing power, and it usually is as sudden as it is strange, though probably other people have already found it out and traced the steps of its approach. . . . But yet the ebb has its poetry too, though the colors are more sombre, and the sentiment is different. The flood, which in its rise seemed almost individual, pervaded by something like conscious life or force, becomes an abstract, relentless fate when it pours back into the deep gulf of the sea of forgetfulness. . . ."

Mrs. Oliphant has herself criticised her own work—she might have done better, she says, if she had written much less, and reached a higher level. Fancy was hers indeed, intuitive grasp of circumstance: only the very bountifulness of her gift was her temptation. "Was it love of mammon," she asks, "which impelled me to write on, or love of my children?" Would the praise of the critics have been worth the daily happiness of all those who depended on her toil for their gaiety and superfluity, those for whom she so gladly slaved, morning, noon, and late into the night? She used to sit up at her writing after every one was gone to bed, and rise again on dark winter mornings to see her boys off to their early school. At times she was weary, but again and again she was able to resume her task with renewed interest. Too often she wrote by her sons' sick-beds, in apprehension and unspeakable terror.

No one has spoken more truly of her than a friend who lived after her for a time in the pleasant Windsor Crescent house. "It is good," says Mrs. Lionel Cust, "to gather up again some memories of that vivid and charming personality, of that brave, indomitable spirit, of that amazing agility which could rise to every emergency and every crisis, which could amuse itself with the smallest interests or penetrate far into the mists of the unseen."

"As I saw her in the last years of her life," Mrs. Cust continues, "she was old, but with the dignity of a queen, and shining eyes which seemed as though they saw far into the distance. She was looking towards 'the more genial land,' waiting for the time when she would be with those again whom she had lost here, and in that steadfast hope she died."

"The one good thing I am conscious of," she wrote to her friend

"A.K.H.B.," "is the great, calm, all-sustaining sense of a Divine Unseen walking in the cool of the garden. . . ."

So much for the Torch-bearers of the Early Victorian days! Not very long ago people spoke of the rising generation knocking at the door; it seems now as if it had already ceased to knock. It has burst in, leaving the doors wide open to admit the draughts from outside, and the shouts and shrieks and the storms of dust, as well as the more harmonious echoes of natural life.

The impatient effects, the incoherent audacities of the post-present taste in literature, art, and music, appeal to an entirely different set of feelings from those which existed in my own age.

I cannot think they will ever impress our children as *our* familiar visions have impressed us, and will still impress those who are yet to live. I heard of a great leader of modern ideas exclaiming the other day, "We are living in the present: why go on constantly dwelling on the past?" But he was speaking to a young woman at the time, and an old one might have answered him, "Because, as you yourself have sung in 'Lest we forget,' the past holds us in its noble grip and it is the present."

This paper was written far from home, at Venice, in the spring of 1912, in a window of the Palazzo Barbaro, that benevolent house most beautiful, where so many of us have been received and entertained in kindness. From its windows, morning after morning, one might watch, beneath the pale blue heaven, a sweet advancing angel brightening every instant in annunciation of the day to come, divinest lights changing into sunshine, morning clouds trailing towards a distant duomo, doves calling, and bells sounding with the dawn.

Just opposite, across the Grand Canal, stands another palace, also with carved balconies and ancient windows and sunlit terraces. This palace now belongs to a lady who, loving good English and beauty of style, has chosen to bestow here in London a yearly prize of a hundred pieces of gold, to be won in fair combat by literary aspirants, young knights of the pen.



MAGIC

BY GEORGE MORRIS STROUT

WITH rain transmuted into jeweled snow,
The birches bow before the Wizard Cold;
The elements obey him; even so
All that the poet touches turns to gold.

THE HOME OF THE HAPPY LADY

By Florence Selden Peple

Author of "Lady Make-Believe," etc.

If any man have two loaves, let him sell one and buy some flowers
of the white narcissus: for the one is food for the body, the other food
for the soul. —MAHOMET.

IT was a large country-place somewhat beyond the outskirts of the town. The house was cool, roomy, and comfortable, with a broad front porch and little balconies festooned with vines. Big shade-trees dotted the peaceful green lawn, and at the far side was a wonderful garden. At least, to Arabella it was wonderful—with its lilacs and peonies, its long beds of nasturtiums blazing in the sunlight. She knew just the time for the poppies to bloom, and the hollyhocks. It was she who had given the place its name—the Home of the Happy Lady. But it did not belong to her: she had never even stepped inside. She lived at Mr. Alexander Prout's; and sometimes she walked out there with his little children and looked wistfully over the old stone wall.

She had not always lived with the Prouts. Her people, straitlaced Puritans, except one frivolous French grandmother, had died when she was twenty-five. Then she lived alone, and worked until she was ill. The Doctor said that it was her heart, and she must not work any more. She lay in the hospital ward, planning how she would make baby caps and centre-pieces to sell, when a letter came to the head nurse.

It was an invitation, the nurse read haltingly, to come and—visit—a Mrs. Prout. Mr. Prout, too, would be—er—delighted to have her. She must stay—er—indeinitely. It must be a sweet home—several dear little children. In fact, the whole family would feel hurt if she did not arrange to come at once.

Arabella's cheeks glowed. Genevieve was a very distant cousin. She had never seen Mr. Prout. It was good of them to write. Yes, she would go. Then, in a little while, she fell asleep—a soothing sleep. Somebody in the world had thought of her.

Before she waked, the nurse tore the letter into little fine bits. She was a kind woman, and tactful with her patients.

Arabella went. Mr. Prout met her at the station. He was a well-built man, with a broad, receding forehead and a very prominent chin.

He stepped from a little group of men who had been listening intently to his conversation. Miss Winthrop's cheeks were flushed and there was a soft glow in her deep gray eyes as she said in a low tone:

"Indeed, it was good of you to come yourself to meet me. And I thank you so much for—that letter."

"Not at all, not at all," he answered in rather a loud voice. "Nobody that's kin to Genevieve is going to want for anything as long as I've got a roof." Several passengers looked back. "No, indeed," he went on; "and I meant just what I said. If you need anything—no matter what—all you've got to do is to ask."

A sudden change came into Arabella's eyes. Mr. Prout was struck by it. He had expected a beaming smile; but instead there was a look of pain, a strange, puzzled, searching look—as if he had been some one else. Then, in a flash, she was smiling again, and saying how glad she would be to see Genevieve and the children. And how old was dear little Theodore?

Mr. Prout replied in the same confident tone; but inwardly he was thinking of that look. He had a gift for reading people at the first glance; but this bothered him. He solved it, however, before he reached the house—he had never yet met a problem which he could not solve: Arabella was queer.

As time wore on, he made more deductions. The woman had been alone a great deal, and had read all sorts of strange old-fashioned books. These, of course, made her imagine things. It would take time to teach her to live again and be like other people; but, with care, it could be done. Besides, the children would help. She got on beautifully with them. Genevieve confided to one of the neighbors how Alex went so far as to give up their perfect jewel of a nurse simply because Arabella seemed to want to be with the dear little mites all the time.

The neighbors so admired this fresh show of kindness that they began inviting the new cousin to teas and bridge, just as if she were a guest of the Prouts. Sometimes she would go, and say such sweet, bright things that not a soul regretted her coming. But now and then she would decline their invitations, stay at home, and sit up reading until two o'clock in the night. Still, as Mr. Prout said, she had probably inherited a streak from that old French grandmother, and it would take time.

Then, too, she had perhaps never gotten over her disappointed love-affair. Genevieve had a faint recollection of a distinguished man falling in love with her. She had sent him away because of some silly notion of duty mapped out either for herself or him, nobody knew which. He went off in a hurry and married some one else—at least, that was the way she thought it was. Not to do Arabella an injustice, she wrote to another branch of the family and asked. They replied that Miss

Winthrop, to their knowledge, had never had an offer. Genevieve made up her mind that, in a quiet, friendly way, she would find out. One day she said: "Bella, I wish you could have had one of the offers I had to refuse, and been married happily, with children of your own." Arabella dropped her eyes, and Genevieve thought that she was going to cry and tell her all about it; but she did not. She merely smiled, kissed Mrs. Prout, and told her what a kind, generous little cousin she was. Genevieve was pretty sure then that the man had never proposed.

As the years slipped on, Arabella grew more like other people. Only now and then Mr. Prout saw an expression in her eyes which reminded him of that strange, puzzling look the day she came. On one occasion she brought Katheryne Elizabeth and the twins in from a walk. David had cut his leg. He was kicking and screaming in her arms. It was a long way from out near the Home of the Happy Lady, and she had a little difficulty in getting her breath. Mr. Prout naturally felt alarmed. He caught the boy almost roughly and demanded:

"What on earth have you been letting these children do now, Belle?"

She explained the accident, she was very sorry, and—after another pause—she added in a perfectly friendly voice: "I hope you won't mind my saying so, Mr. Prout; but I'd rather be called Bella than Belle." She was looking straight at him, and he knew, somehow, that, even jokingly, he could never say Belle again. It irritated him extremely. To convince himself that he thoroughly understood, he spoke of it afterwards to Genevieve. It was as plain as day. Some one she disliked had called her Belle, and she preferred not being reminded of it.

Genevieve was not nimble in puzzling things out; but she knew a clever thing at once when she heard it. She always told her husband frankly that he had one of the finest minds she ever met. Mr. Prout was fond of his wife. He was proud, too, that in selecting her he had been careful to choose a woman who was not queer.

One evening a very unusual thing occurred. Arabella had been there nearly ten years, and nothing like it had ever happened before. They were all gathered in the living-room. The children were lying on the tables and the floor, conning their lessons in mumbling, chewing-gum voices. Mr. Prout was buried in the *News*; and Genevieve was studying a *Woman's Journal*. Arabella was making a cap for the baby, keeping David and Jonathan from pulling each other's hair, and alternately helping Theodore and Katheryne Elizabeth with their geography. Theodore had asked the meaning of a buffer state. Arabella had her hand between the paper-weight and the ink-bottle to explain.

"Oh, I see!" cried the boy. "The two things come together bang—like this!" and with a wide sweep of his arms he caught the gentle fingers cruelly between the sharp edges. "I see. 'Most anything can be a buffer—but just s'pose it breaks!"

"They don't break," she began slowly. Mr. Prout was watching over the rim of his paper. He often found himself studying her face, looking for that thing which baffled him—sure that next time he would see clearly. "They are made strong—and——"

There was a sound of footsteps and a hurried ringing at the bell. Theodore ran to answer it. Mr. Prout straightened up as if he had just looked for the first time.

"Bring it to me," he commanded, as the boy came back, carefully examining the address on a blue envelope.

"Tain't for you," drawled Theodore indifferently. "It's from 'way out in India—and it's for Cousin Bella."

When they looked around Arabella was standing with her hand stretched out. She took the letter, slipped it into her pocket, and said, "Thank you." In fact, she made no sign at all, except that she passed her chair just as if she had forgotten it, sat down on the couch, and picked up the baby cap.

"I think it's time that these noisy kiddies were in bed," began Genevieve, clearing her throat. "Bella, I'll take them up, if you wish to read your letter. It may be something important, and you might want to talk it over with Mr. Prout."

"Oh, no," said Arabella, rising and reaching for the heavy baby. "I've promised them a story to-night—come!"

"When you are through," called Mr. Prout, "I want you to do a little copying for me."

"All right," came a soft, low voice, and the door closed.

Genevieve turned and looked at her husband. The fire crackled contentedly in the grate. "India!" she remarked meditatively.

"Yes," murmured Alexander Prout; "just what I was thinking myself—India!"

Twice in the two weeks that followed Arabella went out alone. Then, one evening, when she was "through" putting the twins to bed, she came down again. In her hand was the blue envelope.

"Mr. Prout, I want to tell you and Genevieve something." Her voice was a little strange. "Some one—whom I used to know very well—has died—and left me a legacy. I——"

"Who on earth was it?" demanded Theodore. "Your beau?"

There was a vault-like silence. She put her hand behind her and stood looking at Mr. Prout. She had been perfectly still when the child spoke; and yet, if there can be anything more still than absolute stillness, Arabella attained it. If Alexander Prout had ever heard of a Vestal Virgin's holy abhorrence before some degenerate thing which had dared approach her shrine, the memory would have come to him now—but he had never heard of a Vestal Virgin. He was conscious only of

something commanding in those wide gray eyes. If he had been asked, he could not have told afterwards why he turned with a tone of contempt to Theodore and said, "My son!" He felt feebly aware that he had wanted to put the same question.

"I came to tell you," continued Arabella, "that with it I have bought a home. For years you've taken care of me because I was n't strong enough to work. Now I shan't let you deny yourselves any longer. I'm not going far away, and you must call on me when you need any help. I've bought the Home of the Happy Lady. You know, she moved to the West recently; and I've bought it just as it is—with the garden!"

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Genevieve. "You're a very lucky woman, Arabella! But I must say I never saw anything in that old place to rave over. It's an old rattle-trap of a building, and as to the wonderful garden—why, anybody can have a garden if they just have the ground. I suppose you'll waste all of your time watering flowers."

"I expect I shall," admitted Arabella. "I'm going up to begin to-morrow. I think I'll have money enough to get on if I raise violets to sell and do fancy work. I've arranged with the lawyers that, at my death, the property will come to you. And, Genevieve"—her lip quivered—"you understand how grateful I am, don't you?"

"Why, certainly, Bella; and you've been a help, too. I expect we'll miss you; but I'm real glad for your good luck." At the word "luck," Arabella tightened her fingers about the blue envelope behind her, and said that she would go up now to bed. As the door closed, the Prouts looked at each other blankly. Presently Mrs. Prout remarked just as meditatively as she had done the first evening:

"India!"

The next day Arabella's trunk was carried up to the Home of the Happy Lady; but the new mistress set out on foot. It was a great event—this first going home, and she wanted to take it gradually. Her heart thumped as she lifted the latch of the big gateway and stepped into the gravel path. As if about to break the spell of enchantment which held chained some poor struggling joy, she crossed the front porch and with a key that was her own she opened her own front door. A faint musty odor met her in the hall. It smelled of books. She drew in a long breath. Never in all the ten years in the Prout home had she caught a whiff of anything like this. It was as if in the silence of the great closed rooms the books had crept forth to live and think and talk among themselves. She could fancy them, at the sound of her footstep, scurrying back to their shelves, leaving their precious fragrance, like incense, in the air. In the parlor were beautiful antique tables, and an old piano with an inlaid top. It was standing open and the keys were covered with dust. She took out her handkerchief and

brushed them. A soft flute-like note answered to her touch. "Oh," she gasped in ecstasy, "sometimes when I'm through—I can play." Her hand went up to her throat to stifle its fluttering. "I forgot—I won't have to wait. The whole day is mine—and every day. I can play now! Oh, just think of it, Arabella—you could sit down now—and play!" She sank upon the stool and ran her fingers over the keys. Then she glanced at a pile of music in the rack. Many of the songs she had known as a child. Her fingers trembled. For the first time in fifteen years she felt that she would like to sing.

She chose as her bed-room one on the second floor, with low windows looking down on the garden. The walls were white beneath slender bands of blue and soft pink roses. The bed was quaint with a high top and filmy curtains. The dresser had an oval mirror in which she caught sight of flushed cheeks and a pair of radiant eyes. "Oh!" she sighed, "it's the most beautiful room in the world—and it's mine!"

Then she wandered out among the flowers. Inside, a shyness had clung to her; but out in the warm sunlight the Trappist seal was broken and scattered to the winds. That spirit which had been crushed since childhood began as a child again. She talked and laughed and whispered to the blossoms. Her fancy built up arched gateways hidden by roses and vines, pictured tinkling fountains filling the air with rainbow mists. She even made a gardener. He lived in the wistaria arbor which she had turned into a little white cottage peeping through its purple flowers. On the veranda were his chair and pipe and plenty of tobacco. She would be kind to this honest soul who ran so eagerly at her bidding, and smiled with pleased understanding when she stooped to kiss a rose.

The sunlight was fading when she came towards the house. She had forgotten that people must eat. Near the porch some tiny blue-bells peeped from the grass. She bent and raised the delicate cups that she might see down into their depths. It was as if she owned a woodland where the pure little thoughts of nature might creep forth unafraid. A blinding mist came over her eyes. . . . Then the 'phone sounded through the doorway. She ran in guiltily.

"Hello, dear," said the voice. "This is Genevieve. Are n't you frightfully lonely? I've just sent Theodore to spend the night with you, so you——"

"No, no!" shrieked Arabella, her eyes wandering desperately. "Run to the door—call him back! I'm not one bit afraid—and"—she caught sight of the purple arbor in a blaze of the after-glow—"and then, too—you see, I've got—I've got the *gardener*!" Her voice changed, her eyes sparkled. "He's six feet, Genevieve, and he sleeps right here on the place—in the little house at the back covered with wistaria! Please call Theodore—call him quick!" Genevieve dropped the 'phone.

There was an unusual flush to Arabella's cheeks and twinkling lights in her eyes as she sipped her solitary tea. Something in her nature had taken mastery as never before. She had deliberately lied and was glad! They could never have understood the truth, because of their very small minds. They would have been hurt. How lucky that she had invented that gardener!

Late that night she knelt at her window, inhaling the soft fragrance. For years it had been her custom to pray for just one thing—infinite patience to battle with the Prouts. Now as she bowed her head she only whispered rapturously, "To-morrow I can see it again—to-morrow it will still be mine!"

For days Arabella lived her joys over again. Each morning she took flowers to the Prouts and helped them with their tasks. As yet none of them had been to call. Genevieve suddenly found that she had a great deal to do, and in the afternoons the children were so cross.

One evening, just as the last touches had been put to the dainty table with its spotless drawn-work, its silver and flowers, there came a ring at the bell. In a flurry Arabella went to answer it. It was Theodore with a basket of rolls. Had he changed? What was it that made him look thinner and more pale? She had forgotten about his trying to hurt her hand, forgotten his snarling voice and his cruelty to the stubby-nosed twins.

"Stay and have supper, dear. It was so good of you to bring the bread. How is your mother to-night? Poor Genevieve, I'm sure she must be tired. Tell her I am coming soon to spend the day and let her rest." She led him in and tried not to hear the noise he made with his lips as he ate. After supper he walked out to the porch.

"You've got a heap bigger yard 'n ours, have n't you?"

"Yes," she answered with a sharp pang; "and if you'd come up oftener and run around in the fresh air and sunshine, it would do you lots of good. Suppose I buy you a spade and let you dig and plant some tomatoes all of your own! Would n't it be fun?"

"I don't care much about diggin'. Have n't you got a gardener?"

"Oh, yes." She flushed. "But I thought perhaps the exercise—it helps me."

After he had gone she sat a long time thinking. All of those children were pale, particularly the baby, Deborah. They did have a yard; but it was very tiny, to be sure. If Genevieve would only send them out more in the afternoons to play—but, then, it was n't Genevieve's nature to do things regularly. How could she help that when she had so small a mind? Perhaps if the children could be made stronger physically, there might be more chance for mental development. Of course—it was but reason. Now, if—with a frightened gasp, Arabella got up from her chair, walked out of the room, and closed the door. Her pace

quickened along the hall, as if the thought she had tried to shut in had slipped through the key-hole and were tiptoeing nearer and nearer. She went into the parlor and closed that door also. Somehow her fingers seemed clumsy at the piano, and her voice sounded strange and afraid. She was not just in the mood to sing. She picked up a book. On the first page she caught sight of the word "buffer"; and again she had the feeling that she must walk out and shut the door. A wind was rising. Somewhere a shutter banged. She jumped nervously and put her hand to her eyes. In the blackness she could still see that glaring white page with the word "buffer"—and other words—lots of them. What did they spell and why did they persist in being read? She started up the stairs; but the words were still in front of her: "*For ten long years they gave you shelter—because of your weak old heart!*" Arabella began to run. "*And even if they had no minds at all—should you ever turn and forget?*" Her breath came in spasms as she reached the landing, clutching at the rail. "*You are merely one human being—they are seven. Is it not far better that seven should have health and happiness than one? What right have you to question their capacity to enjoy? You have never looked at life through their bodies and their souls! And, after all, may not a small mind with the strength to live and do be better than a thousand longings pent up in a broken, helpless frame? If you have the larger mind, was it not given you—to play the larger part? And again—your life is almost lived; theirs has just begun. It is a thing that must be—can you dare to shrink, Arabella, merely because it happens to be you?*"

No protest was voiced from the little French soul. It cowered and shuddered in fright. Only one thing it ventured, "Write and ask them. Don't go yourself—you might break down and cry!"

She wrote and posted her letter at once. Then she knelt at her window. The moon had risen. Over the tops of the flowers she could see the water gleaming silver white. Beyond rose the dark green wooded hills. Far out into the valley the river turned in long, graceful curves—the finger of God tracing upon his beloved earth huge shining letters which spelled—Peace. She bent her head. She fancied that in the shadows she could outline Mr. Prout's mouth and chin. "Come, Arabella," it seemed to be saying, "let us open the war again!"

It was so perfectly absurd to have one's eyes blurred with tears because of doing what was right. It would be far more sensible to smile. So Arabella lifted up her head and smiled, and began all over again to pray for—infinite patience.

The day was soon set for the family to come to live with her. In the mean time, she wandered about ceaselessly. If she could only love them and be glad—only forget that they would rush in and trample down the bluebells.

The night before their arrival, she put the key under the mat. In the morning she would get up early, brush the dewy cobwebs from the flowers, and then slip away in the sunrise beside the river, that they might come in and take possession alone. Something had called her, she expressed it in her note, and as soon as she could she would return.

The next day was a momentous one for the Prouts. They had known all along that Arabella would miss them and be miserable without the children. At eleven o'clock, with unusual promptness and a great display of baggage, they arrived. With a war-whoop David, Jonathan, and Katheryne Elizabeth went rolling over the grass. Genevieve was sorry for Arabella not to see their delight.

The parish minister, Rev. Arthur McDonald, was standing on the porch. He had come to pay his first call.

"She's away on a little business," explained Genevieve, "but we live here, too. We'll be charmed to enjoy your visit. You have no doubt heard of my husband, Mr. Alexander Prout?"

"I am most happy to meet you, I am sure. I had been told that Miss Winthrop lived here alone." As they filed into the parlor, Genevieve expatiated upon Arabella's loneliness. There were fresh nasturtiums in a silver bowl, and large vases of sweet-peas adorned the mahogany tables. Sunshine flooded the windows, and in the garden the birds sang as if their little throats would burst. A volume of Daudet was lying open with a pile of the children's stockings Arabella had brought home to darn. In the hall was a basket of tea-cakes—the kind that Theodore loved. A long spray of clematis had crept into the window and swayed back and forth in the breeze as if, in the Home of the Happy Lady, it found life and light as joyous as that outside.

"How striking a personality your cousin has!" remarked the young minister, wondering in what way she could be connected with these strangers. "I have often noticed her in church—a face of such keen, refined intelligence—such——"

"Come look at the house," said Mrs. Prout abruptly. "Bella won't mind." In spite of protest, Mr. McDonald was led all over the first floor and then up the wide mahogany stairs. Genevieve's voice grew higher and higher with excitement as she talked of changes she and Arabella would make. Alex would simply have to buy a pianola. They were so much more fashionable than that absurd-looking thing in the parlor. And what fun the children would have learning to work it! "Why, that's her room at the end of the hall." Through the open doorway there floated again the song of birds, a chorus triumphant filling every corner.

"We'll go in there, too. I see she's cleaned it up before she went.

She always was the primmest thing! Mercy!—you positively scared me!” she exclaimed as they stepped inside. “I thought you had gone out.” Arabella was sitting quietly at the window, with her chin resting on her arms. She did not even turn her head. The all-pervading happiness had fallen also upon her. She was smiling at the children down in the garden. “Arabella,” said Genevieve almost sharply, “why don’t you speak to us? Here’s the Rev. Mr. McDonald come to call.” She went a step nearer; then suddenly gasped, “Alex—quick—look! Oh, my—oh!”

The two men bent forward, and the minister touched her wrist. It was like ice in the warm sunshine—Arabella was dead.

“It must have been her heart,” said Mr. Prout in a strange voice.

“Yes,” sobbed Genevieve hysterically; “it must have been her heart. Poor, dear Cousin Arabella—so lonely—the excitement of our coming was too much for her. Run, Alex, for a doctor—run!”

“No,” said the minister: “she does n’t need a doctor now. We’d better just lift her to the bed.” Genevieve turned and flung herself into an arm-chair, trembling and hiding her face. As Mr. McDonald bent to lift Arabella, there was a sudden stampede into the room. It was the children. They had tiptoed down the hall. Before any one could stop her, little Deborah sprang upon the window-seat, holding out a rose. “Bella,” she cooed.

“Take her away, Alex, quick!” The other children shrank back instinctively to their mother.

“Bella’s pitty,” laughed Deborah, as the minister tried to draw her aside. “What’s she dot?” Peeping down, she pulled a blue envelope from between her fingers and her cheek.

“Ah, perhaps there was some news—some shock!” exclaimed Mr. McDonald, looking to see why Mr. Prout made no move.

The man was standing gazing fixedly at Arabella’s face. He was thinking of the evening when she had first spoken of this letter, and of that stillness greater than stillness with which her eyes had searched him—that look as if she were seeing something which he could not see, demanding of him that which he did not possess. The same strange feeling came to him now, and he knew in his secret heart that—even in her death—he wanted to *seem* to understand. So just as he had acted on that night, guided by a force he could not explain, incapable of knowing even the beauty of the thing he did, he drew the envelope from the baby’s protesting grasp and slipped it back into the cold fingers.

“Run out now. This belongs to your Cousin Bella. I forbid a single one of you to touch it. *She’s going away—and she wants to take it with her.*”

MIXED DOUBLES

By Owen Oliver

GRAHAM HARVEST and I had won the first set in the final for the club mixed doubles, and we were 4-1 in the second set, when his leg gave way. It was an old sprain, and he had stood out of the singles on account of it; but we had held the doubles trophy for years, and veterans hate quitting.

Our young opponents whispered to each other, and came over to us.

"Of course," the boy said, "we resign."

"No, no!" Harvest and I cried together.

"Oh, do let us, please!" the girl entreated. "Do!"

"We should feel so rotten if we took the prize," the boy protested.

"You are a pair of bricks!" Harvest said cordially. "But Miss Vernon and I have had a good innings, and we'll like you to have the prize. That's all right!"

But they declared that we were the "champions," and the rest backed them up; and the club gave us quite an ovation on our way to the cab which some one had fetched for Graham. They said that I must make a speech, as Graham was disabled. I stood up as the cab was going off.

"It's better than a prize," I called—"all this good-will. Thank you so much!"

Then I sat down.

"Well, Carrie," Graham remarked, "I've won my last tournament."

"So have I!" I rejoined. "Let's grin all the same."

He grinned.

"I don't see why you should n't win many more," he objected.

"*Anno Domini!*" I told him. "I'm two-and-thirty. I would n't tell you, if you did n't know! That makes us seventy together."

"Your skill——" he began; but I cut him off.

"It was n't my skill, or yours," I contradicted. "We just had the trick of playing together."

He nodded emphatically.

"At the end of the partnership," he said, "I'd like to express my extreme satisfaction. You've been the best of partners and the best of sports. Shake hands!"

We shook hands.

"As a partner," I told him, "you've been a great comfort. As a man, you're a great worry. Tennis has been the one thing that's kept you from becoming entirely a bookworm; and a bookworm's a worm! For goodness' sake, take up golf or something, Graham!"

"I'll begin to-morrow," he offered.

"To-morrow," I predicted, "you'll be on the sofa; and for several days. Dr. Jackson says so."

"Good heavens!" he cried. His alarm seemed out of proportion to the cause.

"Your business can do without you for a few days," I said. "You have a partner."

"Not in the business that I'm thinking of," he answered, with a groan. "It's an awfully awkward business too. It's been worrying me silly for the last fifteen months."

"Oh!" I remarked. "I thought you were merely getting more fuddled by your books. Well, if you've kept it hanging over for fifteen months, a few days can't matter."

"My dear woman," he said, "it's a definite appointment for to-morrow afternoon. It's no use saying put it off. I can't. I must go, if I have crutches."

"You shan't go," I contradicted, "if I come round to your aunt's and hold you down! I suppose you can send a message."

"I can't," he denied. "A message won't do. It's a business I've often thought of telling you about. . . . Come in and see Aunt Margaret now, and have some tea, will you?"

"Very well," I agreed.

We had tea; and Aunt Margaret left us; and he told me this story.

You know I don't notice women much. Sometimes I think it's a pity; but somehow I've become a bookworm—except during the tennis season. If I looked at them, they would n't look at me, and—well, there it is!

The doctor and you would n't let me take any books on my trip last Easter twelvemonth; so I had to talk to people. Ruyter, the American millionaire, and his daughter, were on board. She was about one-and-twenty—a round little thing with curly hair and big black eyes. She was very nice to me, but, generally speaking, she gave herself airs. She upset some of the men over something connected with the games. I was chairman of the sports committee, and I gave her a mild fatherly lecture. She took it surprisingly to heart.

"Don't you see, Mr. Harvest," she pleaded, "they hunt and hunt me for my money; and I'm not a fool, and know what their attentions mean. There is n't an honest man aboard—excepting you!"

"My dear child," I said, "you are a silly! For one who hunts your money only, there are three who hunt the money *and* you, and two who hunt your little self. A man can't help liking a pretty girl because she happens to be rich!"

"Oh!" she cried excitedly. "Am I? I often wondered! Sometimes I—I rather thought I was; but I'm 'dumpy,' you know; and I thought it was my money that was pretty! Do you really think I am, Mr. Harvest? Just passably, you know?" She clutched my arm in her eagerness.

"Quite passably, little Vanity," I told her; "and you're quite nice too, when you choose. So now you're going to behave nicely to people."

"I don't know about people," she demurred; "but I'm going to behave nicely to you!"

She did; and we became great friends. Most honestly, I never dreamed of anything more. In fact, I began to be rather bored at being away from my books, and wanted to get to the end of the voyage; and then the—the awful *contretemps* happened.

It was the last night of the trip, and Viva—that was her name—was very restless and fidgety. I told her to come and look at the water and not say a word for five minutes. I thought it would compose her. We stood in the dark, beyond the wind-screen; and at the end of the five minutes she suddenly slipped her arm through mine.

"I know all about it," she whispered; "and I am going to help you out. You love me; but you think I am too rich, and you are a little too old. . . . You are not too old. . . . Father says that money does n't matter, if the man is all right. . . . I have known how you feel about it for a long time, Mr. Harvest."

I can think of only one way to describe how I felt then. I once picked up my brother's big electric battery to move it, and touched both handles by mistake, and got a shock that knocked me flat. I felt like that! . . . It's all very well to look at me as if I were the blindest idiot on earth! I know I am!

"Well, what was I to do? Here was this nice, pretty, young thing, that I'd let fancy herself in love with me—and I suppose if a fool spends fourteen hours a day in the company of a girl, she's entitled to think it, is n't she? Only a cad could have told her that he did n't want her.

"My dear," I said, "the doubt is n't about *my* feelings. I am afraid that you mistake yours. You take esteem and affection and the influence which an older person has over you for something more."

"No!" she contradicted. "No!"

"Ah!" I said. "But I think you do. Trust to my—to the wisdom with which you over-credit me——"

"I do," she interrupted, "in everything else; but just in this I have proved myself wise, have n't I? And—and brave?"

"So very brave!" I agreed. It *was* a plucky thing to do, and you need n't look so contemptuous. It is n't like you, Carrie.

"And suppose—suppose I am right?" she went on. "I should lose more than you know"—her voice sank—"if I let you make me give you up."

What *was* I to do, except what I did?

"I won't do that, Viva," I said. "But you must take time to test your feelings."

"Do you mean that you want time to test yours?" she asked sharply.

"No, no, no!" I cried. "I know them well enough, my dear. But you are young. . . . You intended to go on to France with your father; and you are coming back here in about fifteen months. I will come to you then. Write and tell me where to meet you. If your feelings have stood the test of time, I—I shall ask you what I must not—cannot honorably—ask you now." . . . You need not look like that. I added, "As I want to." How could I help saying it?

We argued a deal; but in the end I prevailed, as I always did with the child. There was to be only occasional friendly correspondence, and she was not to feel bound in any way; but if at the end of the time she felt the same about it, I was to marry her forthwith. I had to let her think that I desperately wanted to. . . . Don't be unreasonable, Carrie. What else could I do? . . . I know you have n't said a word; but you've looked it.

They arrive here to-morrow morning. I have had a letter asking me to meet her in the National Gallery. I suppose she chose that because we last met there, before she went to France and the other places. We're going to travel all over the world, she says. You know how I hate travelling! . . . I don't know why I told you. . . . Well, I do; but it's no use talking about that. She may have changed, of course.

Graham sighed heavily when he finished. I set my lips hard and thought.

"You had better let me go and say that you are hurt," I suggested presently. "If she wants to see you, I can bring her here. At my age, an old maid becomes almost qualified as a *chaperon*." I laughed bitterly. "If she's changed her mind, I can save you both an unpleasantness. You can rely on my discretion."

"Yes," he said eagerly. "Yes. Of course you will be particularly discreet in concealing the state of my feelings."

"Naturally," I told him. "Have you a photo, or anything from which I can recognize her?"

"There *was* one," he said doubtfully. "I put it away in a drawer or somewhere."

I took his keys and found the photo after half an hour's search. She looked a nice girl. He found her last letter after another hunt, and verified the particulars of the appointment. He seemed to grow very grumpy during the searches.

"After all," he said, "I might as well marry her, if she wants me. Nobody else does."

"*She* would n't if she knew you as well as I do," I said tartly. "A more helpless, untidy, book-ridden, wool-gathering donkey I never came across! I pity the child!"

"So do I," he agreed mournfully. "But I've done my best to prevent it; and of course I shall make a fuss of her. . . . I dare say I shall grow extremely fond of her."

"No doubt," I said; and then I went.

I took a cab outside the house. I could n't keep from crying soon, and I did n't want to do it in the street. I was more than sorry. I was ashamed. I must be so utterly unattractive, I thought, to have been friends—for the last three years his most intimate friend—and not to have been able to make him want to marry me. The bitterest shame of it was that I had tried. He evidently would n't dream of marrying me anyhow—that was plain enough from his asking me to do this errand. So it did n't really matter to me, if he married this girl; but I made up my mind that he should n't! The reason I gave to myself was that the marriage would make him unhappy. I knew perfectly well that the reason was a fiction, and that he probably would be much happier with an adoring young wife. You need not hesitate to condemn my conduct. No one can condemn it more contemptuously than I.

I recognized the girl directly I saw her the next afternoon. She had the drawback of dumpiness, as she had said, but she was pretty; a pleasant, bright, affectionate creature, and, I judged, not lacking in intelligence. She was dressed unostentatiously, but charmingly. I coveted her coat.

"Miss Ruyter, I believe?" I said; and she bowed and said, "Yes."

"Mr. Harvest has sprained himself at tennis," I explained, "and the doctor will not let him walk. No avoidable reason would have prevented his coming to meet you. He hopes to be able to do so in three days' time. I am a very old friend of his."

She bowed again.

"Did he send any other message?" she asked anxiously.

"No," I said slowly. "Do you wish to send any?"

She drew on the floor with her parasol, and did not answer. She was obviously agitated.

"Shall we go and have some tea and talk?" I asked.

"Please," she said; and we went to a quiet place which I knew. She said nothing till I had poured out the tea.

"Do you know," she remarked then, "I like you, Miss Vernon."

"That is nice of you," I acknowledged. "I think I like you, too."

She looked hard at me.

"Yes," she pronounced. "I think you think you don't; but I think you do, all the same! You are not anxious for me to see him, are you?"

I considered for some time.

"No," I said at last. "I—I have known him a long time, and——"

"And you care for him," she said quietly. "I know. . . . Does he care for you?"

"Yes," I said.

"More than for me?"

"Yes," I said again.

She wiped her eyes quietly.

"He did not tell me to tell you," I said. "He would stand to his—his agreement, of course, although—although he has changed his mind."

She wiped her eyes again.

"I am glad that he *did* like me," she said, "although— You must not let him feel remorseful. Tell him that *I* have changed my mind. He won't worry then."

And then *I* began wiping *my* eyes.

"My dear child," I said, "I find I do like you. . . . I have lied to you, dear. It is true—oh, so dreadfully true!—that I care for him. He does not care for me in the least. He is coming to meet you to tell you that he has not changed his mind."

She turned white, and I thought for a moment that she would faint; but she rallied bravely.

"Then," she said, "he must never, never know that I have changed mine. He is such a dear, noble fellow. I will *make* myself forget what has happened since; and love him. . . . We will keep our secrets for his happiness, won't we, dear?"

She put her hand softly on mine. I felt faint myself then.

"You—you mean that you don't want to marry him?" I gasped. She nodded. "There is some one else?"

"There is nothing between us," she said slowly. "I told him that I was engaged. He is sorry. So am I. But I shall be loyal."

Then I told her the whole truth from beginning to end.

"So you can marry your lover and be happy, dear girl," I said, "and Graham can live in peace with his books. I shall try to get him to take up golf and not become too musty; and he will be happy too."

The girl squeezed my hand.

"And you, darling lady?" she asked. "And you?"

"I shall mother him as much as I can," I replied; "and that will be something. I dare say I shall be as happy as I deserve. . . . You see, Viva, I treated a man badly once. I was engaged to him; and then I found out that he was just nothing to me compared with my friend Graham. So I broke it off. I thought I'd make Graham in love with me. . . . I dare say he would be if he ever began to think of such a possibility, but the dear old fellow is just buried in his books. I used to dig him out to play tennis. We've won a lot of doubles. Now he won't be able to play any more. Neither shall I. I won't play without him. . . . Whenever we had a hard set, I used to think, 'I'm playing for Graham.' He was just—just every one! . . . I'm a fool! . . . When you've a little time to spare from sweethearting, will you come and see me, Viva?"

"Yes, dear. . . . Will you do me one favor? Don't go to Mr. Harvest first. I want to go and see him myself. It will be nicer than sending a message. I mean to make quite—quite sure that we part friends. . . . Indeed, I don't think we'll part at all—not as friends. We'll be that always. May I go?"

"Of course. It's nice of you, Viva."

"You are nice. . . . There's another favor. Promise me very truly, Miss— No, tell me your name."

"Carrie."

"Promise me, dear Carrie, that you will never let him know that you made out—what you made out to me first."

"I promise that readily enough," I said. "I'm sufficiently ashamed."

"But you just could n't help it, dear. Now we'll go."

She took a taxi to Graham's aunt's; and I went off home. Some time later I went to see him. He was sprawling in an armchair, with his leg up on another chair.

"Well," I said cheerfully, "you've escaped from the frying-pan of matrimony into the fire of—*poof!* Into the sandy desert of booklore! Oh! You will be a miserable old bookworm, Graham! Do take to golf. Or motoring. Or yachting."

"I'll buy a yacht," he said, "and a motor, and a house—if you'll share them all with me, Carrie?"

I had gone up to him to shake hands; and he seized me round the waist and pulled me down on the arm of his chair. I felt rather like I suppose he felt when he had the electric shock. Indeed, I was so astounded that he kissed me twice before I tore myself away.

"You're not going to marry *me* for pity!" I cried like a fury. I was in a wicked passion. "How dared she tell you! If she were here, I'd kill her!"

"Carrie!" Graham said; and somehow I knew from his voice that he did care for me. "Will you trust the word of honor of your old partner? I loved you before you were engaged to Reeves. I supposed then that you did not care for me, though it was my own slow, stupid fault for not proposing to you. I've supposed so ever since till Viva told me this afternoon. I'll get up, sprain or no sprain, if you don't come back to the arm of the chair!"

I went back.

"I don't come because you order me," I told him. "I'm going to order you, mind you—you great silly! I came—because—I wanted to!"

I put my arms round his neck and cried with my face against him. I do so love my old partner!

THE DREAM MINSTREL

BY KENNETH RAND

A CROSS the world from Fairyland the wind has blown a song to me—
 (Harper, wake your magic in the old grey hall)
 And the sunlight on the flagging is a patch of tattered blazonry,
 Shred of fading glory on the dull drab wall;
 Turn again—turn again—see the weave unravelling—
 (Harper, set ye back again the gray Fates' loom!)
 Till the fields are gay with April and the heart has ceased a-sorrowing—
 (Lovers in the orchard, with the apple-trees in bloom!)

Across the world from Fairyland the little winds have flung to me
 Petals of the wild rose, riotous and red,
 And the scent of summer woodland where the sun-embroidered tracery
 Gilds the mouldy carpet of the old year's dead;
 Scent of happy valleys, and the treasure of the marigold,
 Happy, sunny valleys in the Provinces of Dream—
 Hark the whisper, lilting, "*Love, my heart is ever thine to hold—*
Ever and forever, till the last star's gleam!"

Ever and forever—but the wind is o'er the hills to me,
 (The blue hills o' Faerie, O harper in the hall)
 Luring on to follow down the shadow-lane of memory,
 Memory as faded as the sunlight on the wall.
 Turn again—weave again—set the loom ahead again—
 Summer-gold is darkening to hot, blood red—
 "*Ever and forever—forever—*" Ah, the love o' men!
 (Harper, still your magic, ere my heart droop dead!)

"WHEN LUMMUX GETS A HEAD MARK"

By T. C. McConnell

"ARE you never agoin' to say yes?" pleaded Tom.

"Oh, mebbe so."

"When?"

"When Lummux gets a head mark in spellin'. Good-by," replied Betty with a laugh, as she tripped gaily into the house.

Tom had walked home from school with Betty, and she was leaving him at the gate fronting the Pearson homestead. He walked on slowly toward his home.

"When Lummux gets a head mark," he muttered. Practically, she might as well have said "never" and been done with it; for Lummux never, never, could get a head mark. Had she stipulated that she would be his when Uncle Pete, her father's only slave, who did n't know the letter B from a bull's foot, became Governor of Missouri, it would not have been more discouraging.

Now, this Lummux was a big gawk of a boy whose name was George Shanks, but who was nicknamed "Lummux" because he was so awkward and clumsy. He was not dull. In fact, he was rather above the average in mathematics; but he just naturally could n't spell.

Fifty-five years ago school advantages in our neighborhood were few, far between, and from fair to feeble. Four months in the winter was deemed sufficient; for the boys must help do the farm-work; and as for the girls, it was hardly considered necessary to educate them. Certainly, the short winter term was all and more than they needed.

Tom Landon was the champion speller of the Fairview school district. He could recite whole pages of Webster's blue-backed spelling-book from memory.

Tom's father was a well-to-do farmer, called rich in those days. He had told Tom that the northeast forty, on which was a comfortable log dwelling, should be deeded to him whenever he married.

It was more common for boys to marry before they voted than for them to vote before marriage. Thus but few years elapsed from the time they left school until they assumed the responsibilities of matri-

mony; and many attachments were formed among the school boys and girls which remained unbroken for life. For while those primitive people were compelled to be resourceful, they were not "divorceful"—they had no time for the latter recreation, even if they had had the inclination, which was seldom.

Tom was now seventeen, and he looked forward longingly to the time when he should occupy the log house in the northeast forty with Betty Pearson—always with Betty. No Betty, no log house; no northeast forty. It would be Pike's Peak and gold for Tom.

These events happened at the time when the discovery of gold at Pike's Peak lured thousands to emigrate by ox trains, then the only available means of conveyance, across the plains in quest of fortune. That rush for riches, though brief in time, was exciting while it lasted.

But Tom never could tell for sure about Betty. Sometimes she was lavish with her smiles, and sometimes she was shy. Sometimes she was lavish with her smiles upon Jim Rogers too, son of old man Dave Rogers, who had the reputation of being rich, and a hard nigger-driver.

"When Lummux gets a head mark," muttered Tom once more, and continued to ponder the proposition all the way home, and all through the night.

Next morning as he was starting to school a new idea struck him. The more he considered it, the better he thought of it.

"I'll try it, by jing!" he decided. "It's bound to work—if the teacher don't kick. If it works, I'll have a bushel of fun out of it anyhow, whether Betty totes fair by her funny promise or not."

Tom overtook Lummux on the way, and, after greetings, inquired:

"Say, Lummux, are you agoin' to be to school every day for the next three or four weeks?"

"I donno. Why?"

"Oh, nothin'. I—I—er—er—do you reckon you'll have to miss any days?"

"Well, it's like this," drawled Lummux: "there's been a wolf a-g-g-gittin' some o' our sheep of late, an' D-D-D-Dad said I'd hefto stay to home a day or two an' build a wolf-p-p-proof sheep-pen. Dad ain't able to do nothin', y' know. B-b-b-b-but I shot the wolf yisterday evenin' with that crooked bar'l'd rifle o' our'n."

"You did! How in the world could you hit a wolf with that old bent concern?"

"Why, y' see, ther was an awful thick b-b-b-brush-patch betwixt me and M-M-M-Mister Wolf, which I could n't shoot through; so I jist shot around the brush-patch. The old gun bar'l was bent jist right fer doin' that."

"Aw, quit your foolin', Lummux. Tell me, honest, will you have to

be out o' school any? That's what I'm concerned about. I'll tell you why some time, mebbe," urged Tom.

"Well, ther' m-m-m-might be more wolves, y' know."

"Look here, Lummux: you tell your dad that if he has to have that sheep-pen built, I'll help you build it next Saturday. No school that day, you know."

"That's all hunkadory," replied Lummux. "I donno why you don't want me to miss. Now, if it was *you* missed a day or two, you'd hafta go f-f-f-foot when you come in again, an' you might lose a head mark or two; b-b-b-but me! Ugh! I'm at the foot all the t-t-t-time, anyhow. I guess I only spelt seven words right all last winter, an' I'm a-d-d-d-doin' still worse this winter. I reckon I never can learn to spell."

"Oh, well, don't you let that worry you, Lummux. You're the biggest-hearted, most popular old plug in school, anyhow," assured Tom.

By this time they had overtaken Betty.

"Good-mornin', B-B-B-Betty"; and as the girl nodded and smiled in reply, Lummux, realizing that two's company, etc., lumbered on his way alone.

"How are you this mornin', Betty?" began Tom.

"I'm complainin' o' bein' better." And she gave him a withering look, as much as to say, "You gump! You know I'm always fat and sassy. Why do you ask such foolish questions?"

Tom's ardor was dampened, but he braced up.

"Betty, did you mean it yisterday evenin' when you said you'd say yes when Lummux gets a head mark?"

"Yes, if you-all don't pester me no more about it till then," replied the girl.

"And will you take it that everything's fair in spellin' as well as in love an' war?"

"You bet your boots!" Betty was n't exactly sure what the last query meant, but she did n't let that worry her any.

"All right," said Tom seriously; "it's a bargain. Lummux'll get a head mark."

Betty tossed her pretty head and gave him an incredulous giggle, that would have meant in modern parlance, "You'll have to show me."

They had reached the old log schoolhouse. Betty mingled with the girls, but Tom, instead of joining the boys on the playgrounds, went inside and began conning the afternoon spelling-lesson. He had great confidence in his ability as a speller, but no stone must be left unturned.

It was customary for old man John Chilford, the cold-blooded, sour-faced, unbending preceptor, to hear the "big" class in spelling just before dismissing school in the afternoon—or "evenin'," as it was called.

This class consisted of the grown-up scholars—nobody said "pupils" in those days.

There were about twenty in the class, and they stood in a line supposed to be straight, with their backs to the old-fashioned rough wooden desks fastened to the wall. At the close of the recitation the scholar at the head was credited by a head mark, then took his or her place at the foot, and worked back toward head as rapidly as possible, the speed all depending on his aptness as a speller.

Tom had taken first prize the winter before, and, not having missed spelling a word correctly during this term, had the best mark of the class. Betty Pearson, Jim Rogers, and Kate Ferguson were fierce competitors for the second prize, and each even entertained some hope of topping Tom for the first. All three ranked the same, that being only one mark behind the champion. At this time, about midway of the term, fewer than a half-dozen words apiece had been missed by more than half the members of the class. For then scholars learned to spell, while now pupils—oh, well, perhaps you too are in business, and have hired stenographers and typewriters fresh from "business college"!

Having been head the day before, Tom, as was customary, this evening took his place at the foot, displacing the habitual incumbent, Lummux. On the first round, when a word was pronounced to Lummux, he gazed down into the depths of his huge clasped hands as usual, twirled his thumbs as usual, missed as usual, and the word was spelled by Tom. But Tom stood still, and did not "turn Lummux down." In the second round, the scholars that stood fourth, third, and second above foot, each in turn missed a word, and of course Lummux followed suit. Tom spelled it, but again remained stationary, even refusing the tempting offer of going above four at a time. Thus it went on during the entire lesson, Tom always having chances, but refusing every time to take a higher place in the class. Teacher and class looked mildly astonished, but the former volunteered no comment.

Next day Tom continued his peculiar mode of procedure. His method now seemed obvious; The rule was that the scholar who spelled a word that had been missed by one or more above him in the class might "turn down"—in other words, take his place above—the one or more who had missed. But the rule was not that he must do this; he simply might. Of course, all were ambitious to go toward head as rapidly and as often as possible, at each time earning a head mark. Tom was simply establishing a precedent. He purposed that Lummux and a few others who never got very far up the line should have head marks whether they earned them or not. Every day the head scholar must go foot, so by his (Tom's) not going above, each day brought him, by rotation, one notch nearer head: but all those above him must neces-

sarily precede him in arriving at the goal. He calculated that no one could turn him down, hence nobody could turn down those above—could n't because he would n't permit it. Those poor spellers would simply have to climb gradually toward head, receive head marks, and then in turn go foot like good spellers, not by reason of their merit, but through force of circumstances. Tom seemed to have adopted the plan for his own amusement.

On this second day Kate Ferguson came from head to foot, and of course had to remain there. Next day it was Betty's turn to start at the bottom round of the ladder; the next, Jim Rogers's. But there they were and there they stayed, for Tom had the game blocked.

Kate was furious. "Jist think," she complained to her parents on arriving home one evening, "that nasty Tom Landon still stands there like a dog in a manger and won't go head nor won't let none o' the rest of us get up head! He thinks he's so smart! I jist hate him, so I do!"

If Betty was disappointed or angry, she kept it to herself. She was the only one on earth besides Tom who really understood his game, but she gave no sign of her knowledge. Jim was chagrined somewhat, but the privilege of standing by Betty every day helped some to curb his discontent.

As the days passed, each added one more good speller, by the rotation plan, to the ranks at the lower extremity of the class, until Lummux and Tom were about half way up the line. Tom counted those above.

"Only ten more days," he said to himself, "and Lummux will get a head mark. I wonder what Betty thinks of my scheme, anyhow. There are whiles that I sorter imagine she admires the game, and then there are whiles when I think she hates me for it. I'm mighty sure now of winnin', but the question is, what'll she do about it? She may say Lummux never got it fair; that I got it for him; and mebbe she won't stand tied. But, then, she agreed that all was fair in spellin' as well as in love and war. Well, I'm a-havin' the time o' my life, any way."

Five more days, and scholars began receiving head marks for the first—and probably the last—time in their lives. They were well pleased with the new order of things. Lummux, too, was having the time of his life.

"T-T-T-Tom is a-sacrificin' an' a-hangin' f-f-f-fire as a p-p-p-propitiation for my sinful spells," he remarked to his chums. He had n't spelled a word right since the new régime began.

"Next Thursday is the day when Lummux gets a head mark," was heard often on the playgrounds, and the statement was greeted with enthusiasm generally; for the poor spellers liked the plan, and the good ones were glad it would soon be over; Tom having promised to quit running the machine whenever Lummux got his head mark.

At length the eventful Thursday arrived. The big class was called, and it formed in line, Lummux at the bat. Before beginning to give out the words, the schoolmaster delivered a few well frozen remarks. Among them was the following ruling:

"After this recitation, any member of the class, on spelling a word that has been missed, must take his or her place above the one or more who have missed. This rule shall be strictly enforced." And none of us doubted the last statement.

Lummux knew which would be the first word of the lesson, had studied it about a half an hour, and really did spell it; but after that, the words being in four and five syllables, "accented on the third," he missed with his usual regularity.

Tom was nervous. Victory seemed assured, but, after all, would Betty prove to be a standpatter? Of late she had been showing decided partiality for Jim. That hated rival had taken her to the magic-lantern picture-show last night. And here they were, in the class, only a few feet distant from him, side by side. Even now the presumptuous wretch might be holding her hand beneath the ample folds of her apron!

Kate missed a word, and Betty turned her down—that was some consolation for Tom: he would have her next him for one day, at least.

The recitation was drawing to a close. "Immaterial," pronounced Chilford to the head scholar. (Seems so easy, one could n't miss it if he tried, does n't it?) And Lummux, to the surprise of all, did n't miss it.

What a record for Lummux! Two words spelled at one stand; something unheard of in the annals of Fairview district events!

"Luck must be a-rousin' up the gumption of the gump," whispered Kate to Jim.

Then something else astonishing happened, by the side of which Lummux's good spells were as the noise of a firecracker compared with that of a cannon.

Tom missed a word!

What caused such a calamity? Was it amazement at Lummux? Was it due to nervousness? Or, was it just natural-born ignorance? Tom has never explained about that yet, so far as I know. But he missed, and Betty did n't wait for the teacher's ponderous "next," but snapped up the word, flitted by the bewildered Tom, and triumphantly took her place next head—might as well say, head.

Tom felt humiliated; but that was nothing compared with his awful feeling of horror regarding the inevitable fate of Lummux. He foresaw what would surely happen. Betty would go head, and to-morrow afternoon, according to the new ruling, he should be compelled to turn his protégé down and start him on the toboggan slide for lower base. He could see in the future the tantalizing grimaces directed at him,

as Kate and Jim and all the other ambitious spellers each in turn "gave poor Lummux his," and helped him another step toward his doom. Not that they had anything against Lummux. It was the crestfallen champion they would crow over. If they had luck, they would about land Lummux at his old stompin' ground in one heat.

All this he saw in his mind. Then with his very eyes he saw what was ten times more agonizing. It was the saucy Betty, smiling up into his face, as much as to say:

"Aha, Smarty! Next round, and Lummux shall be my meat, and your scheme smashed to smithereens!"

"It's Pike's Peak for this miserable botcher," he mentally exclaimed, as great drops of sweat oozed from his forehead. "Betty's got hold o' the reins now, an' she'll run this team to suit herself. If she cares a picayune for me, she'll miss the words after Lummux misses 'em, and that'll give me a chance to keep him to the fore; but I'll be surprised if she does that. Or, she might balk on turnin' him down—but no, she knows the other girls'll tease her to death if she does that, and say she's a-tryin' to follow my style. Like as not, she's told some of 'em about the scheme, and that would make 'em plague all the more about it. Then, too, she's an ambitious hunk o' sweetness, and wants all the head marks she can get. Oh, well, who's goin' to blame her for that?"

"Pusillanimous," prompted Chilford to the boy at the middle of the line.

"Joy!" ejaculated Tom, almost out loud. "There's only three more words in the lesson after 'pusillanimous.' That means not another word for Lummux. He'll get the head mark yet!"

It was now Tom's time to crow, and he gave Betty a victorious smile, to which that lady replied by a noseward twist of the upper lip.

But again the tables were turned. The lad at centre was a good speller, but he left an *l* out of "pusillanimous."

"Next!" thundered the pedagogue.

"Next" got in both the *l*'s but used a *c* instead of an *s* in the second syllable. The next got the first four syllables all right but made a "mus" of the last. And thus the word bounced on down the line, at each bounce striking a poorer speller than the last, the prospects constantly growing more and more promising for it to reach Lummux, and then—Tom saw Pike's Peak loom up in the distance.

"If she loved me, she would turn and spell it to him in a whisper," thought Tom, "but she won't; and he wouldn't remember how two seconds if she did. I don't reckon Lummux could spell 'pusillanimous' right after a-hearin' it blasted at him, one syllable at a time, out o' Gabriel's horn."

He was right. Betty made no effort at whispering to Lummux.

Instead, she turned away from her victim, leaving him in advance of the main line, occupying proportionately about the same distance held by the leading gander in front of a string of wild geese. With seeming unconsciousness, she turned and nestled up half way in front and deliciously near to Tom, her face toward the all-absorbing scene at the foot. Both looked on and listened with bated breath.

Finally the last speller missed, and the prompter brought forward the word to the head scholar.

Lummux began with a trifle more confidence than was his wont, his big red thumbs whizzing like an electric fan.

"P-u-pu-s-i-l-sil-pusil-l-a-n-lan-pusillan-i-pusillani-m-o-u-s-m-m-m-m-mous-p-p-p-pusillanimous."

And Lummux got a head mark!

Tom's vision of Pike's Peak grew dim. He glanced at Betty, but she was gazing out through the window toward a horseman who was riding slowly up the road, leading a horse on which was a side-saddle. The rider proved to be one of old man Dave Rogers's negroes. Betty seemed quite oblivious to the immediate surroundings.

The remaining three words of the lesson were spelled rapidly, and school was dismissed.

"Bully for Lummux!" shouted a boy, and at once there was a wild clamor of applause and congratulations, in which Betty did not join, but, instead, grabbed her bonnet and wraps and fled from the room, followed by Jim.

Tom passed out slowly, in a kind of daze, arriving on the playground just in time to see Jim and Betty ride away on horseback without a backward glance. The colored man, whose place in the saddle had been supplanted by Jim, was starting homeward on foot. Tom turned and asked Tobe Russell just what time in April his Uncle Allen expected to start across the plains for Pike's Peak with the cattle-train.

At this juncture Lummux stumbled by, grinning from centre to circumference. Tom soon overtook him.

"Lummux," he exclaimed, "I can understand how you come to spell those two first words, but how under the shining sun did you ever come to blunder onto 'pusillanimous?'"

"Sh-sh-shut up, Tom; they'll hear you. Come here an' I'll show you all ab-b-b-bout it"; and he led Tom into the corner of a stake and ridged rail fence, and behind a clump of bushes.

"Y' know when B-B-B-Betty P-l' P-Pearson cuddled up there so close to you—closter, I bet, than she ever let you or any other feller git to 'er before—an' you all was a-watchin' the proceedin's down foot so close? Well, ther was m-m-m-method in her m-m-madness. She reaches back an' grabs a book off o' the desk an' writes somethin' on the fly-leaf

in it, a-holdin' it under her aporn while she writ. Then she tears the leaf out an' slips it back into my hand. Here it is. I reckon this is what th-th-they call 'exhibit A' in court, ain't it? An' I take it, ther's some courtin' doin's agoin' on, mixed up with all this p-p-polly-foxin', ain't ther?"

Tom nodded assent.

Lummux handed his listener a piece of paper upon which was scrawled in letters of colossal size, the word "pusillanimous," the syllables divided properly, so that he who ran might read.

"Well, I p-p-puts the paper down into the holler o' my big scoop shovels, an' I twiddles my fingers mighty fast, so old Chilford could n't see it, an' I reads it all right, did n't I?"

"You bet you did, Lummux!"

"Y' see, B-B-B-Betty was n't a-doin' all that cuddlin' act for nothin'. She did n't want old V-V-Vinegar Face to git a glimpse onto what was agoin' on in the b-b-b-b-background."

Last week (this is written in September) I received a marked copy of the Fawcett (Missouri) *Chronicle*. The marked item follows:

The Honorable Thomas B. Landon, State Senator from this district, as well as father, grandfather, and great grandfather of a large proportion of the population of said district, returned yesterday, accompanied by Mrs. Landon, from a trip to California, Arizona, Colorado, and other Western points. The honorable Thomas takes great delight in boasting of how he walked to the top of Pike's Peak, a locality he had never before visited.



RESURGENCE

BY JANE BELFIELD

MY window looks upon a lea
Of waving marsh that meets the sea;
And where the salt spray frets the bar,
I mark one limpid evening star.

My heart recalls a day I knew;
In fields at home, I watched with you
One summer eve not so long gone,
That evening star above the corn.

TRAPPERS OF MEN

By Samuel Scoville, Jr.

PART III.

LUODOVIC THEODOR RADZEVIL was a blonde giant with a majestic voice and a fierce curling mustache to match. He spoke four languages, loudly, if not well. His English he had learned from a New York alderman and notary-public, who lived abroad for his country's good—incidentally, for his own. As the latter's library consisted of a battered Bible, formerly used by him in administering oaths, and a copy of Jenkins's Law Clerk's Assistant, Luodovic's conversation smacked strongly of the King James's version with a sub-flavor of the law. This element of legality and religion, however, was strictly confined to his conversation. By profession, Radzevil was a barber in an Austrian town, but a trapper by preference. In order to avoid compulsory military duty, for which he was more fitted by mustache than disposition, Luodovic decided on a foreign tour. As his decision was somewhat hastily formed, being contemporaneous with the arrival of the recruiting officer, he landed in Liverpool with ten shillings, two razors, and a mind quite as keen. Near the dock was the emigrant office and barracks of the steamship company. Thither proceeded Luodovic.

"Does the honorable company the services of an upright and experienced interpreter require?" he asked of the clerk in charge. It chanced that the honorable company did. Radzevil confessed to a knowledge of all the more important languages of Europe and Asia, with a smattering of Africa. The clerk, an American—presumably from Missouri—suggested that Luodovic make a few extemporaneous remarks in Chinese.

"Let the honorable president of the company," responded Radzevil tactfully, "query me a question in Chinese, and I him will answer in the same speech."

Luodovic got the job. There were dickerings, divers and sundry, about the emoluments appertaining thereto. Remuneration was finally agreed upon as follows: One first-class passage, one blue uniform, one naval cap with gold braid, one board, one lodging, and ten dollars in

American money when the steamer reached Castle Garden. Radzevil could have obtained more cash if he had been willing to waive the sartorial part of the consideration. To him, however, these insignia of office possessed certain possibilities more valuable than cash. While the uniform was being constructed, Luodovic invested four of his shillings in printing a few hundred cards tastefully inscribed in letters not more than an inch high:

LUODOVIC THEODOR RADZEVIL
International Official Interpreter

The uniform and cap made a brave show. A general impression obtained among the emigrants that Radzevil was at least an admiral. Opposite the station was a barber-shop. To this repaired Luodovic, resplendent in his new raiment.

"What for the shaving of the beard and furthermore and likewise the scissoring of the hair, is the price thereof?" he inquired of the obsequious artist in charge.

"Sixpence for each, if you please, sir," responded the latter, bowing low.

"In the afterwards and hereafter, your price for whosoever bears a card like unto this one," commanded Luodovic, producing a sample card, "is two shillings for scissoring and one for shaving. Also and moreover, the half of these moneys will to me belong. Hire to you abundantly shavers and scissorers, for in fifteen minutes will arrive a multitude;" and the International Official Interpreter strode impressively away, leaving the barber half-stunned at his first sight of high finance. Luodovic betook himself at once to the emigrant quarters and megaphonically announced in four different languages that by order of the company every man and man-child must instantly betake himself to the barber-shop opposite there to be shaved or shorn, or, if possible, both.

"Moreover, to wit," he concluded, "the honorable the company has at a price of the lowest arranged. Shaving of the beard will be one shilling. Scissoring of the hair will be two. So much of smallness of price will be only to him who showeth one of these cards and returneth the same to me." There was a stampede for the talisman. Radzevil distributed over three hundred of them. Thereupon an unshaven, unshorn avalanche rolled in upon the doubting barber. Recovering himself enough to exact payment in advance, the latter proceeded to break all local tonsorial speed-records, anon sending hurry calls to every place which might harbor an unemployed barber. For three days and nights there was the uninterrupted swish of razors, clicking of shears, and jingle of shillings. At last the day of settlement dawned. With

a disingenuousness most repugnant to the frank honesty of Radzevil's open nature, the exhausted tonsorial expert tried to hold back a portion of the commission belonging to his international employer. Luodovic's card-index, however, at once enabled him to detect the attempted fraud. Before his thunderings, the wretched barber wilted and immediately disgorged. Thereupon Radzevil made a similar visit to a near-by hardware store. Followed another masterpiece in quadruple linguistics. Every male emigrant was directed to purchase at the store named a many-bladed pocket-knife at a many-profited price, in anticipation of bears, Indians, and other frontier emergencies of the New World. Every emigrantess, to use Luodovic's felicitous word, was likewise instructed to purchase a work-box at the same place and under the same conditions. The card-index system was retained in full force. The results were even more encouraging than those following the compulsory scissoring. The next day all emigrants were ordered aboard for an unexpectedly early sailing. Radzevil was filled with vain regrets that he had not directed each of his flock to take a Turkish bath and buy a suit of clothes at a price. He had just time to have delivered into his cabin a barrel of choice red-cheeked apples. Six days out the emigrants turned sickly away from the monotony of steerage fare. At this psychological moment appeared Radzevil, the philanthropist, and announced that through his untiring efforts in their behalf the company had finally agreed to furnish passengers with cool, ripe, luscious apples at the nominal figure of two shillings per apple. On his own responsibility, he was giving the steerage first chance, but it would be impossible for him to keep the news from the first cabin for long. Under the stimulus of these remarks and a magnificent apple displayed as a sample, the barrel sold out so rapidly that in simple justice to the first-cabin passengers, Radzevil was compelled to double his rates. The last layer went practically to the highest bidder, no change being given or asked. Luodovic Theodor Radzevil reached New York with two suits of clothes, two hundred dollars in cash, and the names and addresses of nearly one thousand emigrants present and prospective. Upon landing, the International Interpreter made an eloquent farewell address to his constituents. Beginning with a brief review of his unparalleled and gratuitous labors in their behalf, he touched upon his personal friendship with the President of the United States, and then, giving them the address of his prospective office, indicated that he still was not weary in well-doing in their behalf. If so be that any desired to obtain exemption from military service at a nominal figure, or to arrange for either the sending or receiving of money from the old country without charge, let them come to their friend, tried and true, Luodovic Theodor Radzevil. The peroration was on the duties and beauties of philanthropy and moved his audience to tears. The captain was differently affected at

the parting. He prophesied that Luodovic would eventually be hanged.

Radzevil immediately opened an imposing office in the shipping district. A whole side-wall was emblazoned with the Austrian coat-of-arms. Above this in letters of ruddy gold appeared the words "Luodovic Theodor Radzevil, Official Interpreter of the Austrian Empire and International Agent."

Acting on the suggestion conveyed in his farewell speech, many of his countrymen began to consult him about military service, that bug-bear of continental Europe. For the petty sum of ten dollars, Radzevil agreed to confer with the President of the United States by long-distance telephone and arrange for the exemption. If the conference was favorable—and there is no recorded instance where Radzevil's influence failed—the applicant was given a certificate with an imposing seal to the effect that the holder was exempt from military duty, and bearing the signature of the International Agent. Not one of those so protected was ever compelled to serve in the United States army—and Radzevil's reputation as a protectionist increased apace throughout emigrant circles. In the matter of receiving and transmitting funds, the results achieved by Radzevil were not so spectacular. Remittances disappeared or diminished with distressing regularity. Radzevil explained that he, of course, could not personally superintend the mails. His time was too much taken up in conferences with the President regarding military affairs. Yet he suggested, reasonably enough, that if remittances forwarded under the seal of the International Agent himself went astray occasionally, the loss of those exposed entirely unguarded to the rapacity of postal authorities must be certain. Moreover, he, Radzevil, paid the postage, so that even if the letter was lost it had cost nothing to send. Furthermore, he was keeping a list of all losses, and at a convenient season intended to present them to his friend the President, whereupon the money lost would be refunded by the government with heavy interest.

In numerous other capacities Radzevil was frequently called upon to act for his constituency—at a price, invariably at a price. In summer he wore white serge and in winter a fur-lined overcoat, recognized *indicia* of prosperity, responsibility, and philanthropy. Yet a blight descended upon his prospects when in full flower. The Austrian consul sought by injunction proceedings in a federal court to restrain the International Agent from using ten square feet of the official Austrian insignia. Luodovic appeared *propria persona* and stated to the court that he was a counsellor and a member of the Austrian High Court. With unruffled demeanor he explained that these proceedings were actuated by jealousy, envy, bigotry, and other undesirable emotions. The judge, much impressed, granted him time to file an answer. Unfortunately for Radzevil, the motion papers contained various allegations as to his use of the United States mails which came to the attention of the

postal authorities. Presumably against the wishes of his friend the President, certain of the Secret Service men were assigned to the case. This was more than the proud spirit of Luodovic Theodor Radzevil, Official Interpreter and International Agent, could brook. On the first intimation that an investigation was pending, the storied arms of the Austrian Empire gleamed alone. No longer and nevermore will that emblazoned glory be overshadowed by the six feet four inches of impressiveness which bore the name of Luodovic Theodor Radzevil. What was New York's loss was Luodovic's gain, judging from the interest the United States District Attorney's office took in the facts brought out by the investigation.

TUUM EST!

BY ADA MELVILLE SHAW

A LITTLE pinewood cabin
 Set where the sage-brush grows,
 Ten billion heights of sunshine,
 A tinted prairie rose,
 And stars!—stars!—stars!—
 Stars when the day is done;
 Silence and stars and the fragrance of life
 Where the prairie breezes run.

A simple pinetree doorstep
 Set on the virgin sod,
 The curlew's plaintive calling,
 The grasses' graceful nod,
 And clouds!—clouds!—clouds!—
 Cloud castles in the blue;
 Sunshine and clouds and a promise of rain,
 And the coolness of the dew.

A humble homestead cottage
 Set where the cactus blooms.
 Afar on snow-swept summits
 Jove's mighty summons booms;
 And wind!—wind!—wind!—
 Breath of the whirlwind globe,
 Stars and clouds and wind and sun,—
 Who covets the ermined robe?

THE OTHER MAN'S STORY

By Kenneth Groesbeck

HE threaded his way shyly through the maze of filing-cabinets, for all his brawny six feet of Irish manhood, and slid into the chair alongside the editorial desk.

"Well, Mr. Maloney," said the Great Man, referring to the memorandum before him, "what can we do for you?"

"'T is stories ye buy, is it not, sorr?" queried his visitor.

"We do sometimes," said the editor, with just a touch of sharpness in his voice. "Have you something to submit?"

The big Irishman looked at him in momentary bewilderment; then, "'T is not to submit, sorr," he said. "'T is a story I'd be after tellin' ye, if ye'd care to hear it."

"Now, Mr. Maloney," said the Great Man patiently, "write it out, won't you? Then we shall be glad to look it over."

"Faith," returned the other deprecatingly, "I niver could do that. But if ye've tin minutes——"

"All right," said the editor sharply, glancing at the clock and then settling back in his chair. "Let's hear it."

"'T is this way," began the Irishman. "Timmy O'Brien an' me, we were on Ingin Company Forty, d'ye see, sorr—an' it's pals we've bin this tin year or more. What I'm wishin' t' tell ye about, it happened two year ago, at th' big factory fire in Houston Street—th' wan th' big scandal was about, sorr. Th' captain he says t' me, 'Patrick, d'ye take th' head o' th' hose'—th' nozzle, ye mind, sorr—and skin around th' top o' th' roof, wid th' byes behind, and play down on th' fire through th' skylight.' Which I does, an' hot goin' it was."

"I know the fire you're talking about," said the editor, turning quickly in his chair to his newspaper files. The rustle of the papers was the only sound that broke the silence for a moment, while the visitor stared about the mahogany-furnished office, and then——

"'Maloney, of Engine Company Forty,'" read the editor concisely, "'volunteered to climb to the roof with the high-pressure hose, and attack the fire from that point. The captain had refused to order any of his men into a position so dangerous. The other volunteers, who followed the nozzle-man, were quickly overcome by chemical fumes, and

Maloney himself nearly lost his life. An inquiry is under way—and so on.

"That account does n't entirely agree with yours," said the editor, smiling over the top of his glasses.

The big Irishman flushed a brick-red, and looked at his scarred hands a moment.

"Thim papers is usually wake on facts, sorr," he said. "Proof enough o' that is that they say nothin' o' Timmy. Wait till I tell ye what *that* bye did.

"Bein' on th' roof, meself, I had a breath o' fresh air occasional, an' was that much better aff than th' byes below. Thim poor fellers keeled over, wan after t' other, an' thin I sees through th' black clouds o' rollin' smoke th' relief party runnin', close to th' floor fer th' good air near it, an' carryin' thim away. So I was alone on th' roof, wid th' big brass nozzle squirmen' like a mad snake, an' th' wather thrashin' like th' divil. Be chance, did ye iver hold a fire-hose, wid th' high pressure?"

"Can't say I ever did, Maloney," smiled the Great Man. "Go ahead."

"Well, sorr, th' furst thing I know, th' brass divil twists itself out o' me hands, which was bad burnt by that time, an' knocks me wan on th' head, an' over I goes. Not bad enough that I was out altogether, d' ye see, but so I was wake as wather, an' lay there a-fryin' nice as annything. Sure I said me prayers fast, fer 't was growin' hotter, an' th' sthream was agoin' aff th' roof, and all over th' worrld, but where 't was most needed.

"Thin, when I was about gone, up comes Timmy—O'Brien, ye see, me pal. An', d' ye mind, he comes clane up through th' burnin' buildin', and 't was worse then than when th' other byes had keeled over, an' over th' roof he crawls. Be th' saints, as I watched him comin', dazed-like, I see his eyebrows go up in puffs o' smoke, an' his coat begin to smoulder, soakin' wet as it was. An' at last he reaches me, grinnin' fearful, wid his face all peelin', an' slings me over his shoulder.

"'This fer Katy, ye auld slob!' he says, like that, an' I don't know nothin' more till we're both safe an' sound in th' hospital, wrapped in bandages wid only our noses out—an' I mind his was bad burned, at that."

He stopped and regarded the editor hopefully. "'T is not much, sorr," he said regretfully. "But I was hopin' ye could make somethin' out av it?"

"Who is Katy?" said the Great Man abruptly, tapping his desk with his pen.

"Katy?" said the Irishman softly, with a far-away look in his eyes. "Katy's the lass we both had been keepin' company wid. D' ye mind

th' small, black-eyed kind o' woman, wid a smile that 'd jump th' heart out of ye? Faith, we were both bad gone on her thin, me th' longest, from havin' known her whin she was a kid, in th' auld country."

"Well, what became of her?" said the editor slowly.

"Why," said Maloney soberly, "she married Timmy, av course, he bein' th' better man. 'T was th' least I could do, to go an' tell her how he 'd pulled me out, an' spoiled his looks a-doin' it. Sure, he was near dead, an' still in th' ward, w'in I was well enough to be out a-tellin' her about it. She ups and beats it to th' hospital, an' sits beside him all th' time he 'd let her, holdin' av his hand, and cryin' over him fit to make th' angels weep. He was so bad, though, that th' furst day she was there he hardly knew her.

"Thin I goes to him wan day, an' leans over him an' whispers, soft-like, 'Ye blamed fool, ye 've got to get well—fer Katy.' He opens his eyes an' looks at me, an' shakes his head. But I makes up a string o' things I thought she might ha' said, only she did n't, an' right away he begins to cheer up. Thin I laves 'em alone together, all th' chances I get. An' Timmy he gets better an' better, an' th' dear little gurl she hangs over him wid her black eyes all wet, an' holds his hand. 'T would be a sick man fer further orders, sorr, as would n't get well, wid Katy waitin' fer him!"

"But," said the editor, with a puzzled look, "you were in love with her yourself, did you tell me, Maloney?"

The Irishman looked at the speaker with some astonishment. "Ye must see, sorr," he remarked, "that 't was up to me to back Timmy, he havin' saved me life."

The editor nodded. "Why, of course," he said dryly.

"Well," continued Maloney, "one day I drops in to see her, not havin' time to go to th' hospital to ask after Timmy. She takes me be th' hands, an' tells me how happy she is, because he's goin' to get well. Thin she springs th' surprise of me life on me, an' says, all av a sudden, 'Patrick, ye're sure ye're not in love wid me, yerself?'"

The Great Man leaned forward in his chair. "Yes," he said. "And what did you say then, Maloney?"

"Me? I sees th' twinkle in her bright little eyes, an' I knows she's jokin'. So I speaks up, quick-like. 'Ye little chump,' I says, 'av course I'm not in love wid ye,' I says. 'Go on an' marry th' bist man in th' worl'd, an' God bless ye!' Thin she bursts out laffin,' an' all uv a sudden begins to cry, an' I knows that's a way wimmen have whin they're that happy they'd like to burst wid it. So I beats it.

"Well, sorr, that's about all there is to th' story. Timmy he got well, an' they got married—a foine weddin' it was, sorr, an' I gave th' bride away meself—an' they're as happy a little pair as ye'd care to see."

"But," said the editor, "I don't quite see why you tell *me* the story? It was a brave deed of O'Brien's, but there's hardly enough to it to make a story out of, you see. How much did you want for it?"

"Me?" said the big Irishman heatedly. "Me? I don't want nothin', sorr. 'Tis Timmy's story, not mine. Ye see, 'tis this way: Timmy's not so strong as he was, an' he had to lave the company, though there's a bit av a pension comin' to him. An' there's a shmall kid, sorr, an' th' little woman's worried like, an' th' money's fearful short these days. Sure, I was a-thinkin' ye could buy Timmy's story, an' sind him th' money, d' ye see, sorr? So's the little lass'd be less worried, an' th' kid—a foine, red-headed little brat he is—could have a few fixin's I know he's needin'. Is it worth nothin' to you, sorr?"

The Great Man sat still awhile, looking at the big Irishman in the strangest way.

"Yes, Maloney," he said at last quietly; "*that* story is worth something, after all."



INVOCATION

BY ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH

THEY lips a lover's are, O Night,
Soft as the breath of dew
Upon the wild-rose heart, when stars
Their ancient tryst renew.

As droops the lily to the pool,
So bend thy lips to mine,
And all the riches of my heart
To thee will I resign.

To me shall come in angel guise
The dreams that calm and bless;
And I shall find thy touch is rest;
Thy kiss, forgetfulness!

THE MISSUS AND THE KIDS

By Harold Playter

"TOMMYROT," said Prescott. He sank himself more comfortably into the wicker chair and crossed his legs with a complacent air of readiness to elucidate great truths. "I tell you, gentlemen," he continued, "when that boat went down very few of the men were thinking of the women and children as a whole. Perhaps the officers were—they're trained to it; it's their business—but the average man was thinking of his own women, if he had any, or, if he had n't, of his own skin. Most of us are elemental in a crisis, and there is too little demand for personal bravery these days for it to be common. Even if all the florid newspaper talk were true, the best that could be said of many of those people is, 'Nothing became them in life like the leaving it.'"

He punctuated his remarks with gentle blows on the arm of the chair. The other three men occupied the less comfortable seat across the back of the smoking-compartment. Prescott usually appropriated the wicker chair. He was a good-looking, smooth-shaven fellow, not over thirty-five; he talked with fluent ease and pleasing gesture; why should he not slip naturally into the choice seat and hold forth?

The train was sliding down the grade, through the cool night air of the hills, toward southern Sonora, having just crossed the line. The usual disparaging comments upon the Mexican customs service having been made, they had begun talking of a recent disaster at sea.

Donald McPherson, in his corner by the door, drew gingerly on an awkwardly held, anæmic cigarette.

"But don't you think," he asked in his high, thin voice, and with a smile in which deprecation struggled with absolute negation of the other's viewpoint—"don't you think that they should have full credit for what they did? Is n't that sort of sensationalism better than muck-raking and murder accounts?"

Prescott smiled indulgently. "Oh, sure!" he replied. "Give 'em full credit—they need it—but don't teach our youth that to die like a hero, sacrificing oneself for the multitude, atones for any kind of life we may choose to lead. Hero-worship is all very well, but when the drug-clerk sells strychnine for quinine, and the shop-girl short-changes her customers, while beatifically dreaming of it, it's high time to call

a halt and remind them that heroism, as well as charity, begins at home."

Donald slowly shook his head, resolutely setting himself against such iconoclasm.

"But surely," he persisted, "it is a good thing to keep such ideals before us."

"Sure, sure!" Prescott waved an impatient hand, scattering cigar-ashes. "Nobody says anything against ideals, but a man won't have much time to moon over 'em if he takes proper care of his family."

"But——" began Donald, a tinge of red coming into his cheeks.

"Now, now, Donald," cut in one of the other men banteringly, "you know that if that wife of yours and the kids had been on that boat, you would n't have thought of anything else."

Donald smiled good-naturedly, but refused to be convinced.

"That's all very well, Fred," he began again, "but——"

Here the fourth man, a rugged individual nearing fifty, who had been drumming in impatient boredom on the window-pane, deemed it time to change the subject.

Said he: "I heard you fellows tell the porter to put you off at Chonita, so I suppose you're goin' up to El Chulo. So'm I. I hear the Yaquis are pretty bad in that section. I'm goin' out from there to look at a mining proposition, if I can get an escort. My name's Smith."

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Smith," said Prescott, with a nod. "It's a good time to buy, but a poor time to work small propositions in that locality. These Yaquis are bad *hombres*."

"Oh, they are not so bad," urged Donald, ever the champion of the maligned or the oppressed. "Don't you think they would have been all right if the government had given them fair treatment?"

Prescott's fleeting glance at the Scotchman was almost contemptuous. He pressed the button for the porter and disposed of the matter with an engaging smile, and: "I think that your faith in mankind does you great credit, sir, and that I ought to be the last to attack it just now; for, gentlemen, I am on my honeymoon, and will ask you all to drink my health. Porter, it's up to you."

With an alacrity reminiscent of fat tips, the porter took the orders, and Prescott continued: "I have some business with the El Chulo Company, and thought I'd combine it with pleasure, as my wife wanted to see something of Mexico. They tell me there is no danger from Yaquis in a place the size of El Chulo."

The bridegroom having been properly toasted, Donald, after paying for his round of drinks, rose.

"We get to Chonita about daylight," he said, "so I think I'll turn in."

Prescott watched the Scotchman's big frame fill the doorway and disappear. Then, with a slightly cynical smile, he turned to Matthews, the third man who had spoken.

"Your friend's body is not so limited as—as——" he hesitated, the quick intuition which made him known everywhere as "Prince" and "good fellow" telling him that he had gone too far.

Fred Matthews, a slender, smooth-shaven man of about thirty, looked at him rather coldly. "As are his ideas, you were about to say," he supplied. "Don't worry about McPherson's ideas. He's not very glib in expressing them, but, take it from me, they're all good." He knocked the ashes from his pipe, and filled it with the contents of a brown-paper cigarette.

Prescott, somewhat abashed, hastened to make amends.

"No doubt you are right," he said. "One should n't be hasty, but his persistent misinterpretations got on my nerves."

Matthews lighted his pipe, then tossed away his ill-humor with the burnt match.

"Yes," he said, with a smile half-humorous, half-affectionate, "Donald usually belongs to the opposition. You see, he's Scotch, and he deals chiefly with machinery. He's assistant master mechanic for the Company, and, let me tell you, he knows each nut and bolt on the six plants by its first name. His chief says that he himself is there only to keep the men from abusing Donald, who won't fire even so abhorrent an individual as a neglectful engineer if the man has a family or is hard up. I'm in the office, and don't see much of him now, but we used to eat at the same mess before he was married. Even then he did n't mix much with the boys—that habit of insisting on mechanical accuracy of speech, and his firm adherence to old-world traditions, did n't make him popular—yet I'll bet no man in Sonora has lent more money to impecunious ne'er-do-weels. He never could talk—had no gift of expression except through his machines—and seldom obtruded himself unless he thought some one was on the wrong track, when, as you see, nothing could stop him. And since his marriage he has been still more quiet. Even with 'the missus' he seems to carry on a species of telepathic communion. Went back to the Old Country to get her—a mighty fine little woman, who, without any mawkishness, thinks the world of Donald. He did n't want her to come back from this vacation until the Yaqui scare was over, but she would n't be left behind."

Matthews paused, glanced doubtfully from the rather unimaginative face of Smith to that of Prescott, whose flexible expression was now one of lively and sympathetic interest, then continued rather hesitantly: "Speaking of their silent understanding of each other reminds me of a habit of theirs. Every evening after supper—not dinner, mind you—they sit side by side on their front porch with hands folded, gazing

mutely over the 'dobe houses to the cactus plain and the hills beyond. They're solemn enough to be almost funny, but somehow I always think of 'The Angelus.' It—it's like a prayer. You get the idea from their faces that they're thinking big things, and that each knows the other's thoughts. Even the kids play around quietly at that time." He stopped, somewhat embarrassed by his own earnestness.

"Good," smiled Prescott reassuringly. "Good. That's rather fine."

"Pretty good sort, eh?" said Smith. "Seems to be lucky in his wife, too," he added with a whimsical grin. "I've got no kick coming on mine, but sometimes I think I'd like to try that stunt of just sittin' quiet after supper." The others laughed. "Well," he yawned, "I guess it's time to go to bed. D'ye think"—turning to Matthews—"that I can get that escort from El Chulo?"

"If you have enough money," smiled Matthews. "But better travel at night, and alone. Yaquis don't do much night-work."

"Not me," said Smith. "I've lived in the West all my life, and don't take any chances with Indians. I've got a good rifle, but I don't want to use it. Good-night."

Chonita, in the centre of a barren plain, with its little station and dilapidated adjacent garden-plot, and its two rows of some twenty adobe houses fronting the track, is on the map chiefly for the purpose of connecting El Chulo with the outer world. A good many people left the train there in the morning, most of them women, many of whom had children with them. They were returning from the shrine of a saint upon whose altar they had laid pitiful images of maimed hands, or of other afflicted members of those near to them, asking that they be restored to health; and to whose priests they had given their little all for the saying of masses. They chatted volubly, though quietly, their eyes shining from the folds of the black mantillas with a subdued exaltation, as they made their way to the other side of the station. There the narrow-gauge train of engine, eight loaded flat cars, and one coach was already made up, although not due to leave for an hour. Most of the Mexicans climbed into the coach at once, not having money for breakfast at the uninviting Chinese "hotel" across the way, to which the Americans repaired.

Matthews found himself contrasting the two women where they sat opposite each other at the long table: Prescott's bride, pretty, vivacious, so full of the picturesqueness of her surroundings as to be hardly conscious of the discomforts about which she would soon complain; Mary McPherson, with face a little too angular, jaw a trifle too square for beauty, yet soft and womanly, managing her two chicks—a boy of four and a girl of three—with quiet competence as she listened sympathetically to the other's chatter.

Breakfast over, Donald and his family strolled down to the office

of The Chonita & El Chulo R. R. Company, to talk with the manager of that twenty-five mile aggregation of rotten ties and wobbly rails. Prescott attended to his bulky luggage, then put his wife on the car, where she squeezed between two Mexican women on the long seat along the side and immediately took out her sketch-book, a small boy opposite with the face of a rather brown and dirty seraph having gladdened her artistic eye. The whole car was soon intensely interested in her work, and she elected to stay where she was, although at the last moment the manager, in view of the extra crowd, added another coach for Donald and the rest.

They crawled on a steady up-grade over an apparently level plain, sparsely covered with cactus and low brush, toward the restful green of the October hills. Just beyond the half-way switch, where the grade was level, they had to stop for the usual repairs to the rickety engine. The track here ran northerly at the base of a bare hill which rose steeply to the east, standing alone in the plain. To the west sloped away a broken, rocky country, having occasional growths of mesquite, and flanked by low, bare hillocks.

Donald, joined by Prescott, strolled forward to watch the inept tinkering of the Mexican engineer and his fireman. A quiet suggestion now and then from the big Scotchman served to speed the work. Mrs. McPherson, with Matthews, Smith, and the little Mexican conductor, stood near the rear steps.

"*¡Sta bueno!*" called the engineer finally, and as Donald turned to go there came the crack of a rifle from off in the west, followed by a surprised grunt from the engineer. Donald turned again, to find him writhing on the ground. With a leap and a yell of "*Yaquis!*" the fireman was in the engine cab and out the other side. His body was found later on the stark hillside, which he had attempted to scale in his panic.

Donald waved a quick arm to those in the rear to get aboard, then, stooping, he exerted all his great strength to heave the body of the moaning engineer into the cab. A bullet passed through his hat. Had the Yaquis not been short of ammunition, no more would remain to be told. Followed by Prescott, the Scotchman clambered over the engineer's body to the throttle. The train started with a jerk, and, followed by a few harmless bullets, was soon steaming around the hill eastward.

Prescott turned his attention to the stricken engineer, but even as he did so the man died, lying on his back, his feet sticking out one side of the cab, his head, wobbling grotesquely, hanging down the opposite steps.

"Fire up," ordered Donald briefly, his eye on the track ahead, intent on the utmost speed. There was a different quality in the Scotchman's voice—the ring of the voice of the man in command who knows his business.

Prescott stoked, then came forward and leaned out of the cab window, wiping his streaming face. He glanced toward the rear of the train, then turned to Donald with a white face.

"My God, McPherson, there's only one coach on!"

Donald leaned out of the opposite window, shutting off his steam. Some two miles down the track, which was clear to that point, was the hill behind which they had stopped. The missing coach was not in sight. In the comparative stillness they could hear the faint popping of shots, not rapid, but coming with a certain deadly regularity. The train had stopped, and was now sliding slowly back down the grade.

"Close your draughts," ordered Donald curtly. "We're going back."

Prescott's face, which had regained some of its color, went livid.

"No, no, you mustn't go back! By God, you shan't!" His voice rose to a scream, and, wrenching at his hip-pocket, he drew a revolver and levelled it at the other's head. "Put on your brakes! Turn on your steam! Go forward or I'll kill you!"

For answer Donald, with two quick movements, threw over the reverse lever and pulled the whistle-cord. For a second his cold eye rested on that of the other, then swept to the track below. The engine reversed, and the train gathered speed, bumping and swaying. The dead man's head rolled from side to side and bumped against the steps, the eyes staring hideously. The unused steam burst with a deafening roar from the safety-valve.

With a sob Prescott threw his revolver to the floor of the cab and began to plead, shouting frenziedly. He laid hands upon the Scotchman's shoulders, clawing at them; but Donald paid him no heed—did not hear him. He was nursing his train around the slight curves, giving it all the speed he dared, and at regular intervals he blew the whistle. So they sped westward; and when they had reached the level grade, and the speed had slackened, Donald turned to his throttle. Then, in an interval between whistle-blasts, his ear caught some of the words that the other spoke: ". . . my wife, my wife—and they're Indians, McPherson—don't you see what it means? They're almost all women and children, man . . . and almost no hope of saving the others!"

At the words, "my wife," Donald stayed his hand upon the throttle and looked at Prescott with a softened expression. Then, gradually, a look of sick horror spread over his face. For the first time, he understood just what he was doing. Before, he had known only that his Mary and their children were in danger, and that a coward was trying to keep him from them. In the heat of action, he had not even realized just how awful their peril was.

The train was moving more slowly now, but the curve at the point of the hill was only a quarter of a mile away. With automatic regularity, Donald's hand still pulled the whistle-cord.

Prescott was calm now. He knew men, and the mind and soul of the simple man before him were as an open page. His voice rang strong, and he threw into it all the compelling magnetism of which he was master.

"McPherson, you spoke of ideals last night. God knows this is hell for you, but you can't take that car of women and children back there——"

Donald interrupted him: "You are right. But I must get back to the missus and the kids. You take the train up alone."

Prescott blocked his way.

"No, no, I'd wreck it at the start. If I'd known anything about an engine, I'd have killed you back there. And you can't put the women out here and go back. The Indians are working this way, and they'd wreck us before we could get out, or kill you——" He broke off, for he saw that Donald was lost to him again. One inert hand on the unopened throttle, the other poised on the whistle-cord, the Scotchman's face was turned toward Prescott, but the strained eyes looked through his companion and beyond. He seemed to be listening for something. For some moments he remained thus, while the train crept within one hundred yards of the curve. Then Prescott, watching in an agony of suspense not unmingled with awe, saw the eyes soften, the tense lines of the face relax, and knew that he had won.

And then, for greatness begets greatness, John Prescott became great. Snatching the revolver from the cab floor, he began to climb over the body of the dead engineer.

"Hurry, McPherson," he said. "Take the train up alone. I'll go back and do what I can."

Donald roused himself, and reached a hand to the other's shoulder.

"Come back, man," he said gently. "It's certain death on the open track, and I need you to fire." And Prescott obeyed.

One good man, under cover, with a good rifle, can do wonders with a band of Indians. Smith took command.

"Now, ma'am," said he, "you sit right down behind that compartment with the kids, and don't you worry—they'll miss us soon and be back. Matthews, get me a package of cartridges out of that leather sack there, and tell the Greaser to break off the backs of some of these seats and stack 'em along this side of the car. Tell him not to be scared."

The black eyes of Pedro, the conductor, snapped.

"Do not call me Greaser," he said sternly, in perfectly intelligible English. "And I am no coward."

"Come, come, Pedro," said Matthews sharply, "do as he says. The gentleman meant no offense."

"No, I did n't mean to hurt your feelin's, Pedro. Get busy. They tell me," Smith went on conversationally, while loading his magazines and arranging his sights, "that some of these Yaquis have Mausers, given to 'em by the Mexican government in hopes they'd be good Indians and become soldiers. If that's so, they'll be borin' holes in the woodwork after awhile. But they're a long way off yet. Let 'em waste their lead. But say, Matthews, why did n't they tear up the track?"

"Probably did n't plan an attack," replied Matthews. "I never knew them to attack this train before. It's too risky. Often there are soldiers aboard. There's a water-hole down there that's a favorite camping-place of theirs. Probably some one just took a long shot at the engineer, and, now their blood is up, they want to see what's in this coach. May be some Mexican renegades with them."

Matthews and Pedro with an axe were breaking the seat-backs loose and passing them to Smith. All were crouched below the windows. A few tentative shots had passed over their heads or buried themselves in the sides of the car. It was a combination mail and passenger coach, the narrow mail compartment running along half the length of the car on the west side. Behind this double wall sat Mary McPherson with the two children.

"Can't I help?" she asked. "Is n't there anything I can do?"

"No, ma'am," replied the cheerful Smith. "You just keep right still, and close to the floor. Better not stick your legs out that way, or the boys might step on 'em."

With slightly heightened color, Mary promptly withdrew the offending members.

"I never fought Yaquis," Smith went on, "but I guess all Indians are pretty much alike. They ain't exactly cowards, but they like to play safe. I can hold these fellows off for quite a while in front, and they can't flank us soon, for there ain't much cover there to the right and left." He broke out the remaining windows and began shooting. An Indian jumped from cover, threw up his hands with a horrible yell, and dropped. Smith promptly put a bullet behind the bush where he had fallen.

"Just because an Indian yells and falls down ain't any sign he's dead or even hurt," he remarked laconically.

But, having discovered that there was only one rifle, the Yaquis were growing bolder. They were making especial efforts to reach the track to the north, that they might tear it up. Far up the track sounded the locomotive's whistle.

"Ha!" said Smith. "There they come. Get ready to hook us on, Pedro. — a railroad company that uses rotten couplings! We jail 'em in the States. Hear that, ma'am"—as another and nearer blast sounded. "They're starting down the grade."

Something in the last words struck across Matthews's consciousness. He tried to think why they should be significant, then Pedro asked for his assistance, and he forgot.

Smith pumped busily away, the sweat pouring down his face. Pedro, ready with chains and coupling, crouched by the door. Matthews sat on the floor opposite Mary, who, with a child under each arm, was listening intently to the more slowly nearing whistle-blasts. Presently these ceased, and a puzzled expression crossed her face. Then the tears came into her eyes for the first time, and she bent her head over the children, straining them to her.

"Oh, my kiddies!" she murmured. "Oh, my kiddies!"

Soon she raised her head and put her hand on Matthews's knee.

"Fred," she said, "Donald is not coming back. He has realized that it is too dangerous for the other women and children. If you get away, Fred, make people understand—don't let them think wrongly of Donald." Her voice had scarcely a tremor now, and her face, in spite of the mother agony in her heart, was serene. "It is what I would have had him do," she whispered.

The tears were streaming down Fred Matthews's face. Unable to speak, he pressed in both of his the hand on his knee. For the moment he forgot his peril—forgot that he might soon have his tongue cut out, his body horribly mutilated.

The whistle sounded again, and Pedro brightened visibly. Then came another blast and another. Pedro turned with an expression of childlike surprise.

"It is going away," he said.

Smith caught the words, and turned savagely.

"What!" he shouted. "Are the cowards leaving us?"

"Mr. Smith," said Mary sharply, "my husband was too much of a man to run a car of women and children into this danger, even to save his wife."

For a moment Smith gaped in amazement, then his clear old eye lighted with admiration, and he spoke soothingly:

"Sho, now, ma'am, I wonder if you ain't right! . . . Take that, — you!" And his rifle spoke again.

Pedro, head between hunched shoulders, was repeating mechanically, "They are going back up the grade—back up the grade."

Again Matthews's mind struggled for a meaning in those words. "Up the grade"? "Down the grade"? And in a flash of memory he saw himself watching some men unload a car. Having emptied it, they tried to push it along, and when they could not move it, took bars, placed the ends on the rails under the wheels, and slowly levered it forward.

Matthews grabbed the conductor's shoulder and shook him roughly.

"Pedro, you fool," he shouted, "are n't we near the down-grade?"

Pedro did not even look up.

"*Si, Federico,*" he answered, "but two men cannot push the car, and we have no bar, and we should both be shot at once. The grade begins at the shoulder of the hill, one hundred *metros* away."

"God!" cried Matthews, in the despair of the man untrained to action. "If I only knew what to do! Smith, tell me what to do!"

"Want a bar?" asked the busy Smith, somewhat jerkily. "There's a set of drills in my kit. Always carry 'em. Mexican blacksmiths can't temper steel. But I—guess—you boys 'll—have to hurry."

Matthews had plunged into the big leather sack. Selecting two of the longest drills, he gave one to Pedro, and, followed by the latter, scrambled through a window opposite the compartment. Then, Pedro at the forward truck, Matthews at the rear, keeping their bodies behind the trucks, inch by inch with their short levers they pinched the car along, straining, sweating, cursing.

As the car took the grade, two Yaquis gained the track in the rear, firing wildly as they ran. There was a fusillade from the Indians in front. Smith dropped his gun and hauled Matthews through the window. Pedro made the front platform and fell with a bullet in the shoulder, then raised himself to the brake-wheel—and fell again.

It was Smith who took the wheel until out of range, then, relieved by Matthews, pulled Pedro's body within and bound his wound.

"The pore little Greaser," he said gently. "But he won't die; he's got the grit of a white man."

As the train pulled into the station at El Chulo, the agent came running out with a yellow paper in his hand, calling, "The car has ron down the grade weet safetee, Meester McPherson. A telegrama for you!"

Donald took the missive, and, without opening it, handed it to Prescott, who stared in surprise.

"But it's for you," he said.

Donald shook his head. "No, it's for you."

Prescott opened the paper and read:

It's all right, Donnie. I understand.

"Yes," said Prescott; "you are right. It is for me—for me and—Smith."



THE AWARD

BY ANTOINETTE DE COURSEY PATTERSON

DAWN'S lovely opal lights the eastern skies,
Noon brings a topaz all one golden glow,
Then sunset doth a burnished ruby show;—
But night, with one white star, bears off the prize!



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY

IT seems a long, long time ago when we sent out valentines. Those were pleasant little missives. I refer not to the caricatures, by which the romance of the day was much impaired, but to the lacy, heart-and-arrow, poetic kind, some of which cost as much as ten cents.

The feverish distribution of these did no harm; on the contrary, it must have worked good. The sentiments expressed were at least read, even if not always believed, sometimes not understood. Few of us but can recall excerpts, which we repeat with a certain wistful zest that decries age! We appreciate them now more than we did then.

Why not really revive Saint Valentine's Day? We need it. We need more of the sentiment that is cheap; not cheap sentiment. We need this authority to pause in our hurly-burly, our pursuit of the tangible and the material, and to give ourselves over to one general indulgence in the romance and chivalry.

All the world loves a lover. The fact can never die. And although Saint Valentine's Day is but a masque and a mummery, wherein we play at a Court of Love, its twelve hours of pretty pretense distil dew upon the most sordid heart.

We in America have few gentle observances; we do much for practical gain and much out of patriotism; but we devote ourselves—we as a people—little to the purely fanciful and ethical. We have lost May-Day, a graceful custom doomed, perhaps, by natural progress. However, may we not have back upon our national calendar good Saint Valentine's Day,

in all its innocence of eternal vows to sweeten the workaday heart? Though it come as a fad, let it come.

EDWIN L. SABIN

LOWER PRICES FOR THEATRE TICKETS

AT last the gentlemen who cater to the entertainment of the play-going public in what are called the first-grade theatres are awakening to the idea that only by a material price-concession at the box-office can they entice into their establishments a portion of the millions of new amusement-seekers created by the photo-play and popular-priced vaudeville. Also, the producers of plays—now the smallest in number in thirty years—are in accord with the effort now in evidence throughout the country to attract this new public, already increasing its expenditure for amusements as a result of the advent of what is known as the feature-film, such as "Quo Vadis" and "The Last Days of Pompeii."

So successful has been the outcome of a dozen popular-priced movements in widely different parts of the country since the opening of the present season, that many of the inactive producers of plays, who have either capitulated to the lure of the camera-man or else have abandoned the amusement field for the time being, are now emboldened to tempt fate in what many believe will result in an epidemic of high-class plays at bargain prices of admission.

It is a truth that no popular-priced movement having the true ring to it has ever failed of a public response. This does not mean that the two-dollar-a-seat playhouse has been affected materially, but in other days the play-producer with a moderate success on his hands had a chance. To-day there is no such thing as moderate business in the playhouse zone, unless for some of the real successes, which at times are so numerous that even some of these fail to attract profitable business. The partial success, such as was wont to endure for several seasons in the past, more often than not is forced to the store-house instantaneously, so ghastly have been the box-office records.

The amazing vogue of the photo-play has driven off the road cheap melodrama and kindred amusements of a popular-priced nature, and has emptied the galleries of even the first-grade theatres; has, in fact, attracted an average of about ninety per cent. of the population of every city from ten thousand up. Of this ninety per cent. not one in ten had ever been a patron of the regular playhouse, but gradually in various parts of the country it has been proved that this tremendous public will respond to any material concession in prices; and, once enticed into luxurious theatres to witness plays presented by players

in the flesh, the real has been found so superior to the simulative that success such as has not been known in this class of playhouse in ten years has resulted.

It is the dollar show in what were two-dollar houses that is now seemingly a solution of all managerial problems, and scarcely a city of any size in this country has not at least one of this class, while the conditions created by such a change have already resulted in concessions in admission prices in the majority of theatres, though in some instances the reduction is hardly announced.

A notable instance of the trend toward lower admission prices is to be seen in the success of the production of the musical comedy "The Candy Shop," which was prepared to dedicate the new Gaiety Theatre in San Francisco. This playhouse, costing five hundred thousand dollars, is the exclusive undertaking of G. M. Anderson, known to fame as the "Broncho Billy" of moving-picture plays. Having amassed a fortune as part owner of a vast photo-play concern, Mr. Anderson decided to invest his capital in a playhouse where no seat would cost more than a dollar, but where through a large seating capacity and good management the stage performances would equal if not surpass those seen in the two-dollar houses.

Having organized his company, and the production being ready weeks before the new theatre was, Mr. Anderson decided to play "The Candy Shop" in some of the large cities on the way to California, always insisting that a dollar be the outside price for seats. The success of this company has so astonished the managers of the theatres in these cities competing with it that in several instances not only the theatre where the company played, but also rival establishments, began to adopt a similar policy.

ROBERT GRAU

FUTILE RAILINGS

SINCE the world began, men have hurled upon the more or less devoted heads of women sartorial disapproval. Jeremiah began it, and the end is far from yet. Curiously, one phase of complex woman man has never adequately focussed: her tendency toward lateral methods when reprisals were "up to" her. Had it, success would more frequently have crowned his reformatory labors.

Few men realize the power of silence, or that suggestion ranks anathema. For generations, the o'er-whitened face, the rouged cheek, the dyed hair, and the mouth reddened hideously, have furnished text for pulpiteers and husbands. Rare are the converts recorded. Chiefly because masculine objections were obviously confined to kinswomen. More women these days go clean-faced, not because of aforesaid jeremiads,

but because common-sense has taught them the futility of such beguilements. The hobble skirt too eagerly adopted by the masses disappeared. So, given a little more time, will this unrighteous garment that is audaciously slit where it should be decorously sewed. That spirited women respond slowly to lordly scoldings or priestly railings, is known to women. Moreover, fashionable women dress not to lure the male, but to better, or bother, their sartorial competitors. That the sex magnet has its place and hour, is true, but to slit their skirts in order to increase their admirers would indeed be to flaunt the flag of desperation. When they slash wickedly, if so it be, it is merely to proclaim the furore cry from Paris. It's a silly world, my masters, in which fashions stately and modes trifling alike pass into the nevermore. Why make their brief life so dolorful? Surely by now no living devotee to Parisian vagaries can hope to save her face with any trousered being, hence, a little charity, kind sirs, a modicum of kindly patience, and lo, the skirt voluminous (carefully sewed all around) will once more be *the thing*.

A fashion-loving mother, wife, or sister may not be as wise as a serpent, according to man, but that she is as harmless as a dove is more often true than her self-elected mentors wish to believe.

Modernity in the feminine is more afraid of being thought dowdy than wicked, because for the former the critical world has no tolerance, whereas wickedness is a condition usually of the judge's mental attitude. That so personal a matter as the width of a skirt should engage men high in the world's esteem, is absurd, for, as go the abominations of fashion, so will disappear the equally "awful" "Turkey Trot" and "Tango." Meanwhile, a sudden happening, a serious call, a demand for tender service, is only required to prove that noble souls oftener than not wear butterfly gear.

MINNA THOMAS ANTRIM



THE NATIONAL CURRENCY BILL

By Edward Sherwood Mead, Ph.D.

AS an indication of the progress the United States has made toward the new freedom, we are to have a new banking system, which, in the words of an official in the Treasury Department, is to transfer the heart of the nation from Wall Street to Washington, and remove its circulatory system from private hands.

The defects in the banking and currency system of the United States, which the new law is designed to remedy, are as follows:

First: Our national bank-note circulation was not elastic. It did not increase and decrease in volume in response to changes in the demand for currency. Before a national bank could issue bank-notes, it must buy government bonds and deposit them in Washington, reducing its available funds, and bringing on a contraction of loans at the very time that extension was demanded.

Second: The money which composed our banking reserve was scattered over the country in small amounts or held in the central reserve cities in a manner which kept the banks of those cities, especially New York, constantly indebted to the rest of the country. This debt was so great that it was impossible for the central banks to pay on demand. When the demand was made, as in 1907, cash payments were suspended. This centralization of reserves also led to the use of immense sums in call loans on stock exchange collateral, which could not be paid in time of panic, when there was no demand for the securities back of these loans.

Third: The assets of our banks under the old system were not available for rediscounting, in order to release money for new loans. Rediscounting was viewed as an acknowledgment of weakness, while the accepting by banks of drafts to be discounted by the drawer on the strength of the bank's credit, was not authorized nor permitted by the law.

Fourth: There was no centralization of authority, no financial leadership. Every bank was free to do as it pleased, control any emergency, and usually chose to protect itself without reference to the necessity that it coöperate with the banks to prevent a general loss of confidence. Much has been done by the Clearing House associations to secure such

necessary coöperation, but this action was always delayed until panic threatened, and was usually too late to inspire confidence in depositors.

The new bill has the following objects: first, to provide for the expansion and contraction of currency and credit, according to the seasonal demands of trade; second, to confine the credit of a particular region to that region by keeping its deposits there and preventing their flow to the money-centres; third, to extinguish the present bank-note circulation, secured by government bonds, and substitute in its place an elastic currency based on the current assets of the banks; fourth, to take the control of credit from the financial centres and distribute it throughout the several regions into which the United States is to be divided, giving to each section equal availability and uniformity of credit. All this, it is hoped, will be accomplished by the Act, which, in its own words, is to provide for the establishment of Federal Reserve Banks, to furnish an elastic currency, to afford means of rediscounting commercial paper, to establish a more effective supervision of banking in the United States, and for other purposes.

The work of organizing the banks under the new Act is to be carried on by what is known as the Reserve Bank Organization Committee, composed of the Secretary of the Treasury and not less than two members of the Federal Reserve Board. As soon as practicable, this Board is to meet and designate eight (this number may be changed) cities which thereafter are to be known as Federal Reserve Cities. They are further authorized to divide continental United States, which includes Alaska, into districts, each district to include one, and only one, Federal Reserve City.

The only power having authority to review the determinations of this organization committee shall be the Federal Reserve Board, when it is organized.

The districts so created, to be known as Federal Reserve Districts, need not be permanent, since it is provided that readjustments may be made and new districts created from time to time by the Federal Reserve Board. Like the old Act, which makes it compulsory to include the word "national" in the title of any national bank, the new Act specified that a Federal Reserve Bank must include in its title the name of the city in which it is situated, as, for example, Federal Reserve Bank of New York. It must be borne in mind, from now on, that whenever the word "bank" is used, it includes State banks, banking associations, and trust companies, as these institutions are eligible to membership in the new system.

No Federal Reserve Bank will be allowed to commence business unless its capital is subscribed to, to the sum of at least \$3,000,000. Subscriptions to the capital stock of these Federal Reserve Banks are provided for under regulations of the Organization Committee, whereby every national bank in the association is required, and every eligible bank is

authorized, to signify in writing within sixty days after the passage of the Act, its acceptance of the terms and provisions.

After the Federal Reserve Banks have been organized, every national banking association in the particular district is required, and every eligible bank permitted, to subscribe to the capital stock of the Federal Reserve Bank to a sum equal to six per cent. of the paid-up capital stock and surplus of such bank. The payments of this subscription are to be made in instalments: one-sixth on call, one-sixth within three months, one-sixth within six months, and the remainder or any part of it subject to the call of the Federal Reserve Board, whenever it is necessary. All these payments must be made in gold or gold certificates.

The old double liability of shareholders is to be retained by the provision which specifies that the shareholders shall be liable individually, equally, and ratably, for all contracts, debts, etc., of the bank to the extent of the amount of their subscriptions to such stock, at the par value thereof, in addition to the amount subscribed, whenever the subscriptions have been paid up in whole or in part.

The law provides a measure of compulsion for those national banks which might otherwise refuse to subscribe to the stock of the Federal Reserve Bank of its district, by stating that if they refuse to do so within a year their charter shall be forfeited, and the bank compelled to sell its government bonds in order to provide for the redemption of its outstanding national bank notes. It may happen that the banks of a given district will refuse to subscribe to the capital stock of their Federal Reserve Bank, or that the subscription by banks (in the judgment of the Organization Committee) may prove insufficient to provide the amount of capital required (\$3,000,000). In such a case, the committee may offer to public subscription at par the capital stock of any Federal Reserve Bank, this public stock to be subject to the same liabilities and payments as the member bank stock. However, no person, partnership, or corporation will be allowed to subscribe to more than \$10,000 par value of stock in any Federal Reserve Bank.

In the event that both the banks and the public fail to subscribe to enough stock, the United States shall be allowed a subscription to be paid for at par out of the money in the Treasury, and the Secretary of the Treasury is authorized to hold this stock and dispose of it later, as he shall determine. This stock, not held by member banks, is devoid of voting power in the hands of its holders, but the voting power shall be vested in and exercised by the Class C directors of the Federal Reserve Bank, who will be known as Voting Trustees. This voting power, however, is limited to one vote for each \$15,000 par value of stock—fractional amounts not to be considered.

Another radical departure from the old system is found in the provision requiring the Federal Reserve Bank to establish branch offices

within its district or within the district of any other Federal Reserve Bank which may have been suspended.

By its organization certificate each Federal Reserve Bank is delegated eight powers: (1) to adopt and use a corporate seal; (2) to have succession for 20 years; (3) to make contracts; (4) to sue and be sued, complain and defend, in any court of law or equity, as fully as natural persons; (5) by its Board of Directors to appoint such officers as are not otherwise provided for in the Act, to define their duties, require bonds of them, and fix the penalty thereof, to dismiss such officers as may be appointed by them, at pleasure, and to appoint others to fill their places; (6) to prescribe by its Board of Directors by-laws not inconsistent with law to regulate its business; (7) to exercise all powers specifically granted by the Act, and such incidental powers as are necessary to carry on the business of banking as prescribed in the Act; (8) upon deposit with the Treasurer of the United States of any bonds of the United States in a manner provided by the existing law relating to national banks, to receive from the Comptroller of the Currency circulating notes equal in amount to the par value of the bonds so deposited; such notes to be issued under the same conditions and provisions of law which relate to the issue of circulating notes of national banks secured by bonds of the United States bearing the circulating privilege.

The Board of Directors will consist of nine members to hold office for three years. These directors will be divided into three classes, known as Classes A, B, and C, and will be chosen in the following manner:

Class A, consisting of three members, will be chosen by and will represent the stock-holding banks.

Class B, also consisting of three members, who will be the representatives of the public interests of the district.

Class C, whose three members will be designated by the Federal Reserve Board.

No director of Class B or C can be an officer, director, or stockholder of a member bank. The explanation of the method of selecting and electing directors of the various classes need not be entered into here, as it is involved and not essential to an understanding of the Act. It is sufficient to say that when the directors have been elected at the first meeting of the full board of directors after organization, it shall be the duty of the directors of Classes A, B, and C respectively, to designate one of the members of each class whose term of office shall expire in one year from the first of January nearest to the date of such meeting, one whose term shall expire at the end of two years from the before-mentioned date, and, finally, one whose term of office shall expire at the end of three years. Thereafter every director of a Federal Reserve Bank shall hold office for three years.

The capital stock of the Federal Reserve Bank shall be divided into

shares of \$100 each. The outstanding capital stock is subject to increase from time to time, as member banks increase their capital stock and surplus, or as additional banks become members; and decreased as member banks reduce their capital stock or cease to be members. The shares of stock held by member banks are not transferable, nor may they be hypothecated.

After all necessary expenses have been paid or provided for, the stockholders of the Federal Reserve Bank are entitled to receive an annual dividend of six per cent. on the paid-in capital stock, which dividend is to be cumulative. After this claim has been fully met, all the net earnings are to be paid to the United States as a franchise tax. However, one-half of these net earnings is first to be applied to the creation and maintenance of the bank's surplus fund, equal to 20 per cent. of the capital stock of the bank. This excess of earnings paid to the United States will be used to reduce the outstanding bonded indebtedness of the United States.

State banks and trust companies may become stock-holders in the Federal Reserve Bank in the district in which they are situated by making application, and by complying with the reserve and capital requirements compulsory to national banks, and, furthermore, by submitting to the examination and regulations prescribed for national banks. If it is found, after a hearing, that any State bank or trust company has failed to adhere to all regulations, it may be suspended and its holdings by Federal Reserve Bank stock returned and cancelled.

The controlling power of this whole system is the Federal Reserve Board, the composition of which has given rise to so much discussion and criticism. According to the Act, as it now stands, this board is to consist of seven members, consisting of the Secretary of the Treasury, who is to be a member ex-officio, and six members appointed by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. In selecting these six men, whose salary is to be \$10,000 per annum, together with an allowance for necessary travelling expenses, the President is instructed to appoint such men as will fairly represent the financial, commercial, and geographical divisions of the country, and it is expressly provided that at least two of the persons so appointed shall be experienced in banking or finance.

The terms of office of the several members of the first board shall be as follows: one shall serve for one year, one for two years, and so on, with the sixth serving for six years; but thereafter each person appointed shall serve for six years, unless sooner removed. In order to be eligible for a position on the Federal Reserve Board, the appointee must certify under oath that he will be neither an officer nor a director of any bank, banking association, trust company, or Federal Reserve Bank, nor a stock-holder in any such institution, while he is a member of the board.

The expenses and salaries of this board and their assistants are to be provided for by the semi-annual assessment upon the Federal Reserve Banks in proportion to their capital stock and surplus.

The powers granted to this board are some twelve in number, and so important are they that we take the space to enumerate them in full:

First, to examine the books and affairs of each Federal Reserve Bank and its members, and require reports and statements from them. These statements, two in number, are to show the conditions of each Federal Reserve Bank, and a consolidated statement for all the banks.

Second, to permit or require the Federal Reserve Banks to rediscount the discounted paper of other Federal Reserve Banks at rates of interest to be fixed each week by the Federal Reserve Board.

Third, to suspend for a period not exceeding thirty days (and from time to time to remove such suspension for periods not exceeding fifteen days) any reserve requirements specified in this Act; provided that it shall establish a graduated tax upon the amounts by which the reserve requirements of this Act may be permitted to fall below the level herein-after specified.

Fourth, to supervise and regulate through the Bureau under the charge of the Comptroller of the Currency the issue and retirement of Federal Reserve notes.

Fifth, to add to the number of cities classified as reserve and central reserve cities under the existing law, in which the national banking associations are subject to the reserve requirements set forth in this Act, or to reclassify the existing reserve and central reserve cities or to terminate their designation as such.

Sixth, to suspend or remove any officer or director of any Federal Reserve Bank.

Seventh, to require the writing off of doubtful or worthless assets upon the books and balance sheets of Federal Reserve Banks.

Eighth, to suspend, for cause relating to violations of any of the provisions of this Act, the operations of any Federal Reserve Bank, and to take possession and administer the affairs of the suspended bank during the period of suspension.

Ninth, to require bonds of Federal Reserve agents and make all rules and regulations necessary to enable the board effectively to perform same.

Tenth, to exercise general supervision over Federal Reserve Banks.

Eleventh, to authorize the use as reserves of member banks Federal Reserve Notes, or bank-notes based on United States bonds to the extent that the Board may find necessary.

Twelfth, to grant by special permit to national banks applying therefor the right to act as trustee, executor, or to exercise general trust powers under such rules and regulations as the board may prescribe.

In addition to the Federal Reserve Board, there is to be a Federal

Advisory Counsel composed of as many members as there are Federal Reserve Districts. To this advisory council, each Federal Reserve Bank, by its Board of Directors, will annually select from its own district one member.

The Council will meet at Washington at least four times each year, or oftener if called by the Federal Reserve Board. Its powers are, however, rather limited, as it can only confer with the Federal Reserve Board, make representations concerning matters within the jurisdiction of that Board, and call for information and make recommendations in regard to discount rates, notes, issues, rediscount business, reserve conditions, purchase and sale of gold or securities by reserve banks, open market operations, etc. What these open market operations are, we shall see immediately.

With regard, then, to these open market operations, it is provided that any Federal Reserve Bank may purchase and sell in the open market at home or abroad cable transfers and bankers' acceptances and such bills of exchange as the Act makes eligible for rediscount; deal in gold coin and bullion and make loans thereon, exchange Federal Reserve notes for gold coin or gold certificates, and contract for loans of gold coin or bullion, giving, when necessary, acceptable security, including the hypothecation of United States bonds or other securities which the Federal Reserve Banks are authorized to hold; buy and sell at home or abroad bonds and notes of the United States, bills, notes, revenue bonds, and warrants with a maturity from date of purchase of not exceeding six months, issued in anticipation of a collection of taxes, or in anticipation of the receipt of assured revenues by any State, county, district, or municipality of the United States; purchase from member banks and to sell with or without their endorsement bills of exchange arising out of commercial transactions; establish rates of discount to be charged by the Federal Reserve Banks for each class of paper, which shall be fixed with a view of accommodating commerce and business; establish accounts with other Federal Reserve Banks for exchange purposes, and open and maintain banking accounts in foreign countries with correspondents.

These banks may receive from their member banks and from the United States deposits of money, including national bank-notes, Federal Reserve notes or checks, and drafts on banks of the Federal Reserve system payable on presentation. They may also receive, for exchange purposes only, Federal Reserve Bank deposits of lawful money, checks and drafts on members of other Federal Reserve Banks, payable on presentation.

If any of their member banks have endorsed notes, drafts, or bills of exchange arising out of actual commercial transactions, the Federal Reserve Banks may discount these instruments. This holds true when the instruments arise from business transactions, and also when the

proceeds are to be used in a business transaction. The Federal Reserve Board will determine the character of paper thus made eligible. It is worthy of note here that the definition does not include notes, drafts, or bills covering merely investments or secured or drawn for the purpose of carrying or trading in stocks, bonds, and other investment securities, except bonds and notes of the Government of the United States. However, notes, drafts, etc., admitted to discount under these terms must have a maturity at the time of discount of not more than ninety days.

With regard to foreign exchange transactions, the Federal Reserve Bank is authorized to discount acceptances of member banks, which are based on the exportation or importation of domestic shipments of goods, when these acceptances at the time of discount have a maturity of not more than three months and bear the signature of at least one member bank in addition to that of the acceptor. However, the banks cannot discount these notes without limit, as it is provided that at no time shall the amount of notes so discounted for any one bank exceed 10 per cent. of the capital and surplus of that bank; but this does not apply to the discount of bills of exchange drawn in good faith against actually existing values.

The power is conferred on any national bank to accept drafts or bills of exchange drawn on it and growing out of transactions involving importation or exportation or domestic shipment of goods when such credit instruments have not more than six months' sight. The limit placed on the bank's power to accept these instruments is limited at any time to one-half of its paid-up capital and surplus.

In order to obtain the many benefits arising from bank rediscounts, the Federal Reserve Board is given the power to authorize the Reserve Bank of any district to discount the direct obligations of member banks when secured by the deposit of satisfactory security, but in no case is this amount so loaned to exceed three-quarters of the value of the securities pledged.

The new Act is to give the country a new form of money to be known as Federal Reserve notes, to be issued at the discretion of the Federal Reserve Board for the purpose of making advances to Federal Reserve Banks, and this is the only purpose for which such notes are to be issued. They are to be a direct obligation of the United States, receivable for all taxes and other public duties except customs, and are redeemable in gold at the Treasury or in gold or lawful money if presented at any Federal Reserve Bank. In order to obtain these notes, it will be necessary for the Federal Reserve Banks to deposit collateral up to the face value of the notes issued, with their respective local Federal Reserve agents. The collateral security mentioned above must be notes and bills accepted for rediscount by the Federal Reserve Bank, as has been explained before. If the security so deposited shall not be adequate in the judgment of the

Federal Reserve Board, this Board may call for additional security to protect the notes outstanding. Substitution of collateral is permitted.

Further to strengthen the protection of these notes the Federal Reserve Banks are required to maintain a reserve in gold or lawful money of not less than 35 per cent. against its deposits and its Federal Reserve notes in circulation. But the amount of gold in the Federal Reserve Bank, together with the amount deposited by it with the treasurer, must be at least equal to $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. of the Federal Reserve notes issued to the bank and in actual circulation, and in addition to keep a 5 per cent. gold redemption fund in the Treasury.

Unlike the present bank-notes, the Federal Reserve notes, whenever they are received by another Federal Reserve Bank, cannot be paid out by the receiving bank, but must be turned over to the bank through which they were issued, for credit or redemption. The penalty for violating this rule is to subject the bank wrongfully paying out the notes to a tax of 10 per cent. on the face value of the notes so paid out. To retire this circulation when the country no longer demands it, the Federal Reserve Banks simply deposit with their Federal Reserve agents Federal Reserve notes, gold certificates, or gold.

We have now to consider the redemption of the present national bank-notes. This redemption will take place upon the application of the Federal Reserve Bank to the Secretary of the Treasury, to retire the notes of any national bank which has requested this and has surrendered its 2 per cent. bonds held in trust by the treasury as security for its circulation. These 2 per cent. bonds may be reissued as 3 per cent. bonds or as renewable 3 per cent. one-year notes. When the redemption of any national bank's circulating notes has been so assumed, they shall be cancelled and redeemed out of funds which are to be furnished the Secretary of the Treasury by the Federal Reserve Bank making application, thereupon the Federal Reserve Bank shall be given an equal amount of Federal Reserve notes, without interest or penalty of any kind, and the 2 per cent. bonds, or the 3 per cent. notes or bonds which we have seen may be issued in their place, will be held in trust for the Federal Reserve Bank as security for the redemption of its notes.

The cash reserve provisions of the Act are as follows:

1. If the bank is not in a reserve or central reserve city, it must maintain a reserve equal to 12 per cent. of its demand liabilities and 5 per cent. of its time deposits: (a) in its vaults, four-twelfths for a period of thirty-six months after date; (b) in the Federal Reserve Bank, two-twelfths for a period of fourteen months after date, and permanently thereafter five-twelfths; (c) for a period of 36 months after said date, the balance of the reserve may be held in its own vaults, in the Federal Reserve Banks or in banks in reserve or central reserve cities, as defined in the old Act; (d) after this period of 36 months has elapsed, these

reserves, other than the ones we have mentioned, which must be held in the Reserve Bank, shall be held in the vaults of the member banks or in the Federal Reserve Banks, or in both.

2. For banks situated in Reserve cities, the provisions follow a similar plan. It must maintain a reserve equal to 18 per cent. of its demand liabilities, and 5 per cent. of its time deposits, as follows: (a) in its own vaults six-eighteenths; (b) in the Federal Reserve Bank at least three-eighteenths for a period of 14 months after date, and permanently thereafter six-eighteenths; (c) for a period of 36 months after date the balance of the reserve must be held in its own vaults, in the Federal Reserve Bank, or in Reserve city banks; (d) after the 36 months period, all of the reserves again, except that portion required to be held in Federal Reserve Banks, must be held in its own vaults in the Federal Reserve Bank, or both.

3. The banks of central Reserve cities—New York, Chicago, and St. Louis—are required to maintain a reserve of 18 per cent. of their demand liabilities and 5 per cent. of their time deposits. (a) In their own vaults six-eighteenths; (b) in the Federal Reserve Bank for 14 months after date, at least three-eighteenths and permanently six-eighteenths; (c) for a period of 36 months after date the balance shall be held in its own vaults or in the Federal Reserve Banks; (d) after 36 months have elapsed all the reserves, with the exception of that portion required to be maintained in the Federal Reserve Banks, shall be held in its own vaults or in the vaults of the Federal Reserve Bank or both.

These reserves, it should be noted, are not required to be composed entirely of cash, as it is allowable for any Federal Reserve Bank to receive from its member banks as reserves eligible discounted paper, properly endorsed and acceptable to the Reserve Bank to an amount not exceeding one-half of the instalment. And, furthermore, in order to induce State banks and trust companies to enter the new system, the new law will permit State banks or trust companies to keep their reserves for a period of three years after the establishment of a Federal Reserve Bank in the district in which they are situated, as they are now required by the State laws to maintain them. These required reserves are much less than those required for national banks. Reserves so deposited shall be considered as being held in the national banks in reserve or central reserve cities; the one exception being that no member bank is to keep on deposit with any non-member bank a sum in excess of 10 per cent. of its own capital and surplus.

The reserves carried by a member bank with a Federal Reserve Bank may under regulations and penalties to be prescribed by the Federal Reserve Board be checked against and withdrawn for the purpose of meeting existing liabilities, provided that none of these member banks make new loans or pay any dividends until the total reserve required by

this Act shall be fully restored. These reserves, as will be more fully explained in a subsequent article, are much less than those required by the old law.

In conclusion, two other important Reserve provisions are to be noted, namely, that the 5 per cent. fund for the redemption of national bank notes, which heretofore has been counted as part of the bank reserve, may no longer be so figured, and, secondly, that the Federal Reserve Banks, in addition to the reserves required to be held against Federal Reserve notes, must also hold in its vaults, in gold, or lawful money other than Federal Reserve notes, a reserve of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. of its outstanding demand liabilities, exclusive of Federal Reserve notes.

A radical departure from present banking practice is to be found in the provision allowing any national bank, not situated in a reserve or central reserve city, to make loans on farm lands, provided the land is improved, unencumbered, and situated within the bank's Federal Reserve District. The amount of such loans must not be for more than fifty per cent. of the value of the property, and no bank is allowed to loan more than 25 per cent. of its capital and surplus in this way. Such loans must not be for a period of over five years.

Under certain conditions, national banks may establish branches in foreign countries for the furtherance of our foreign commerce.

In next month's article the attempt will be made to forecast the effects of these provisions upon our financial and commercial life.



AS THE OLD WORLD MOVES

ROYALTY is a magic word to the sycophant and to the author.

Stuart W. Knight

A MAN with a long head seldom has a long face.

L. B. Coley

INTUITION is the faculty by virtue of which a woman can understand her husband without listening to what he says.

R. N. Price, Jr.

THE young man who contests his father's will during life generally has to do it after death.

Harold Susman

THERE are no rounds of drinks in the ladder of success.

R. Rochester.

A WISE man can get more knowledge from a fool than a fool is likely to get from a wise man.

William J. Burtcher